

LEOKA

A FIVE-YEAR STUDY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED AND ASSAULTED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

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CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON POST



California
Law
Enforcement
Officers
Killed and
Assaulted
in the Line of Duty

2000–2004 Report





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Preface

After careful, critical, and thorough examinations and evaluations, the 2000–2004 Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted Report (LEOKA) is available for current review. Although there were fewer peace officers murdered in this 5-year period than in the previous 5-year study, more peace officers were accidentally killed and significantly, more California peace officers were assaulted. The findings in this report by recognized officer safety experts and the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) LEOKA Committee members are extremely important for agency chiefs, directors and sheriffs, first responders, managers, and trainers.

Not only are the contents of this report beneficial to the safety and welfare of California peace officers, but these findings will also play a fundamental role in the future of officer safety for years to come. Consequently, the California Commission on POST is committed to the ongoing research and study of peace officer accidental deaths, assaults, and murders. A passion and reverence for officer safety continues to be important in recruiting, training, and mentoring those individuals who will professionally protect and serve California's communities.

On behalf of POST, commendations and gratitude are extended to the California Law Enforcement agencies that assisted LEOKA Committee members in acquiring information and producing this report. Without their vital contributions and collaboration, such an extremely important program would not be possible. Above all, our sincerest condolences are offered to the families, friends, and agencies who suffered the loss of a peace officer.



Kenneth J. O'Brien, Executive Director
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Executive Summary

“The POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) California Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted in the Line of Duty Program (LEOKA) establishes an information base from which training, policies, and procedures can be developed or enhanced to curtail the injury or death of California peace officers. Some peace officer deaths result from tragic accidents or sudden, unforeseeable attacks. However, other deaths are attributed to unsafe tactics, lack of caution, failure to observe and recognize danger signs, or failure to utilize standard safety equipment or procedures. Not all tragedies can be prevented; however, training can improve a peace officer’s effectiveness and enhance personal safety.”

— Kenneth J. O’Brien
Executive Director

Felonious and Accidental Deaths

The 2000–2004 Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Report published by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) examines felonious and accidental deaths of peace officers and assaults that occurred in California between 2000 and 2004. Unfortunately, the following took place:

- 23 California peace officers were feloniously killed
- 37 California peace officers were accidentally killed
- 40,080 California peace officers were assaulted

Although this is a significant decrease of 10 felonious peace officer deaths from the previous 5 years, accidental deaths increased by 4 more peace officers, while over 5,800 more peace officers were assaulted.

This 5-year study of law enforcement officers assaulted and killed examines 40,080 assaults and 60 deaths of California peace officers from January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2004. The report’s objective is to provide information, findings, and recommendations so that the number of peace officer deaths and assault incidents can be reduced and ultimately prevented.

**California Peace
Officer Assaults**

On behalf of POST and the LEOKA Committee members, we offer our sincere sympathies to the families, friends, and agencies who suffered the loss of a peace officer.

On an annual average during 1995–1999, 6,849 assaults occurred per year. However, between 2000 and 2004, an average of 8,016 assaults took place annually. This represents an average annual increase of 1,167 attacks on peace officers in comparison to the previous 5 years.

During the past 10-year period, 1995–2004, assailants most frequently used their hands, fists, and feet to assault California peace officers. In the 1995–1999 LEOKA Report, hands, fists, and feet were an assailant’s weapon of choice in 79% of the incidents. This trend continued in the 2000–2004 period, when assailants used their hands, fists, and feet 81% of the time to assault peace officers. Although there was a minimal decrease in edged weapon assaults and a slight increase in firearm attacks when comparing the two 5-year periods, the assaults by weapon type over the 10-year period remained unchanged.

When evaluating peace officer assaults by type of weapon – hands, fists, and feet, firearms, knife/cutting instruments, and other dangerous weapons, suspects most frequently chose the following weapons during the noted incidents to assault peace officers between 2000 and 2004:

- Disturbance calls and suspicious persons and circumstances accounted for 64% of all knife and cutting instrument assaults
- Disturbance calls and handling prisoners accounted for 50% of all hands, fists, or feet assaults
- Disturbance calls, traffic stops, and vehicle pursuits when combined accounted for 49% of all firearm assaults
- Disturbance calls, traffic stops, and vehicle pursuits accounted for 47% of all other dangerous weapon assaults

Disturbance calls can be dangerous and unpredictable incidents. In fact, 9 of the 56 peace officers fatally assaulted between 1995 and 2004, or 16%, were handling calls involving domestic violence.

California peace officers were most frequently attacked by an assailant using their hands, fists, and feet between 2000 and 2004. The majority of over 8,400 assaults, or 62%, occurred between 4:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., while the most dangerous 2-hour time period was 10:00 p.m. through midnight with 5,682 assaults, or 14.2%.

Accidental Deaths

Thirty-seven of the 60 peace officers killed between 2000 and 2004, or 62%, lost their lives during an accident. Between 1980 and 2004, a 24-year period, 167 California peace officers have been killed in accidents. From 1995–2004, 70 of the 167 peace officers, or almost half of the California peace officers killed in accidents since 1980, lost their lives during this time period. The prevention of accidental deaths is a priority for California law enforcement.

California peace officers were most frequently killed in motorcycle, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic collisions between 2000 and 2004. Four pedestrian peace officers were killed when struck by vehicle traffic, 11 peace officers were killed in motorcycle collisions, and 13 peace officers were killed in patrol vehicle collisions. The 28 lives lost in the 2000–2004 traffic collisions represent 3 more traffic collision deaths compared to 1995–1999. The primary factors identified in the 28 peace officers traffic-related accidental deaths between 2000 and 2004 were the following:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| ■ Excessive speed: | 8 incidents |
| ■ Citizen driver pulled or turned in front of the victim peace officer: | 6 incidents |
| ■ Pedestrian victim peace officer struck by traffic: | 4 incidents |
| ■ Citizen driver was DUI: | 4 incidents |
| ■ Citizen driver broadsided victim peace officer: | 3 incidents |
| ■ Citizen driver drove into the path of the patrol vehicle (head on): | 1 incident |
| ■ Unknown, victim peace officer drifted off the road: | 1 incident |

The primary cause for the patrol vehicle traffic collisions was excessive speed. The primary cause for the motorcycle officer traffic collisions involved a driver failing to yield for the victim peace officer, causing the officer to collide broadside. Primary fault for the accident was found with the victim peace officer on 13 occasions, 46%, and with the civilian drivers on 14 occasions, or 50%. The other remaining incidents' causal factors were unknown. Several cases in this report found that a seat belt restraint system might have prevented the victim peace officer's death.

Unfortunately, this report also includes accidental peace officer deaths during accidental firearm discharges, an industrial accident, 2 "friendly fire" incidents, and a training exercise. Accidental deaths occurred during the winter, spring, summer, and fall seasons on every day of the week. Tuesday and Wednesday were the deadliest days with 9 accidental deaths on each day and the time

**On and Off-Duty
Felonious Deaths**

period between 12:01 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. claimed the most lives, 14 accidental deaths. The majority of these peace officers, 31 of the 37 accidental deaths, or 84%, were from the deputy sheriff and peace officer ranks, working patrol and traffic assignments, at municipal, county, and state law enforcement departments.

Examining 5-year periods starting in 1980, the most accidental peace officer deaths occurred between 1985 and 1989 with 45 deaths – an average of 9 officers per year. When comparing the deadliest 5-year period to the 5-year period analyzed in this report, 2000–2004, it was noted that the 37 accidental peace officer deaths average 7 peace officers per year. This was the second deadliest 5-year period since 1980.

California peace officer felonious deaths occurred in the state's central, northern, and southern regions. The communities involved were rural, suburban, and urban with 16 of the 23 murders, or 70%, occurring in urban areas. Residential locations accounted for 12 murders, or 52%, followed by surface streets with 8 murders, or 35% and commercial areas with 3 murders, or 13%.

Fatal assaults of peace officers occurred throughout all seasons. However, the spring season March, April, and May, had 10 felonious deaths, or 43%, with Saturdays and Tuesdays, 26% and 21% respectively, being the deadliest days. On Saturdays, 3 peace officer felonious deaths occurred during day hours and 3 fatal assaults took place during the evening hours. The most dangerous time periods were 6:01 p.m. through 8:00 p.m. with 5, or 52%, followed by 10:01 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. with 4, or 17%.

Analysis revealed that vehicle stops and ambushes were the deadliest contacts between 2000 and 2004. Vehicle pullovers resulted in 5 peace officer felonious deaths, or 23%, while ambush attacks claimed 4 peace officer lives, or 18%. Additionally, 10 of the 23 victim peace officers, or 43%, were killed within 60 seconds of their arrival or initial contact. Further, 11 of the 22 incidents, or 50%, found the officers alone when they were killed. Additional suspects were present in 2 of the 22 incidents, or 9%. A majority of officers killed, 19 of 23, or 83%, were from the rank of deputy sheriff or police officer and 16 of 23, or 70%, were working patrol or traffic assignments. Handguns were used during 14 of the 23 felonious deaths, or 61%, followed by rifles in 6 of the 23 deaths, or 26%. The 2000 - 2004 LEOKA Report contains additional relevant statistical data that includes identification of the following factors contributing to the peace officer felonious deaths:

- Failure to recognize danger signs
- Improper and unsafe tactics
- Overconfidence
- Complacency
- Failure to communicate vital information
- Deliberate, sudden, and unprovoked attacks or ambushes
- Lack of interagency planning and coordination

Ambush attacks have changed over the decades from those individuals and groups governed by a political agenda to different types of criminal groups — street gang members, assailants with previous violent contacts with law enforcement, and assailants with extensive arrest records. Ninety-six percent of suspects in the 2000–2004 LEOKA Report had prior criminal history and 13 of the 25 suspects, or 52%, were known to have gang affiliation. Additionally, 6 of the 25 suspects, or 24%, had previous violent contacts with law enforcement and 16 of the 25 suspects, or 64%, had multiple arrest records.

**Officer Safety
Guidelines**

Eight of the 23 peace officers killed, or 35%, between 2000 and 2004, occurred when peace officers initiated law enforcement activities. When examining lethal encounters, the study found a need for increased focus on situation assessment and approach: “Reading the Scene” and “Reaction to Presence.” In the 2000–2004 LEOKA Report, Chapter 2, “List of Officer Safety Guidelines,” provides the following officer safety information:

- General Guidelines
- Patrol Guidelines
- High-Risk Calls/Special Operations Guidelines
- Ambush Guidelines
- Off-Duty Incident Guidelines

Chapter 2’s goal is to present specific training and policy recommendations. Hopefully, a careful and critical review of the 2000–2004 LEOKA Officer Safety Guidelines will encourage leadership and confidence in development of effective policy standards and initiation of comprehensive training.

Executive Summary

Of most importance, during a critical incident, this information may help to provide those involved with the knowledge and skills to utilize the safest and most effective tactic(s) to their advantage, enabling peace officers to ensure personal and public safety, and protect community members, fellow peace officers, and themselves.



Contents

Chapter 1

Commissioners	7
Preface	9
Advisory Committee.....	11
Executive Summary	13
Felonious and Accidental Deaths	13
California Peace Officer Assaults	14
Accidental Deaths	15
On and Off-Duty Felonious Deaths	16
Officer Safety Guidelines	17
Felonious Deaths Study	27
Section 1.1 Incident Information	27
1.1.1 Locations and Conditions.....	27
Peace Officers Killed by Year 2000–2004.....	27
Peace Officer Murders by Region 2000–2004	28
Incidents by Community.....	29
Incidents by Location	29
Lighting Conditions	29
Weather Conditions	30
Time of Year	30
Incidents by Day of Week	30
1.1.2 Activities at Time of Incident	31
Incidents by Time of Day.....	31
Incidents by Type of Contact.....	31
Initiation of Incidents	32
Activity at Time of Attack	33
Length of Time at Incident.....	33
Hours into Shift	34
Continuous Days Worked	34
1.1.3 Additional Persons Present.....	34
Additional Peace Officers Present	35
Additional Suspects Present.....	35

	Witnesses Present	35
	Changes in Equipment, Policy, Procedures, Training	36
1.1.4	Agency Changes as a Result of Incident	36
Section 1.2	Victim Peace Officer Information	37
1.2.1	Victim Peace Officer Demographics	37
	Factors Contributing to Peace Officer Deaths	37
	Physical Profile	37
	Ethnicity	38
	Law Enforcement Experience	38
	Rank.....	39
	Assignment	39
	Type of Unit.....	39
	VPO Physical Condition.....	40
	VPO Cause of Death	40
1.2.2	Officer Safety Responses	41
	Officer Safety Errors	41
	Survival Issues.....	42
	Potential for Violence	42
1.2.3	Training Issues.....	43
	Suspect Known to VPO	43
	Physical Altercation.....	43
	Officer Safety Practices	43
	POST Basic Course	44
	Firearms Qualifications	44
	Defensive Tactics	45
	Defensive Tactics Training	45
Section 1.3	Suspect Information	47
1.3.1	Suspect Demographics.....	47
	Suspect Physical Profile	47
	Suspect Ethnicity	47
	Criminal History.....	48
	Types of Arrest and Parole Status	48
1.3.2	The Attacks	49
	Type of Attack	49

	Reason for Attack.....	49
	Under the Influence.....	49
Section 1.4	Equipment Issues: Firearms	51
1.4.1	Types of Firearms Used.....	51
	Firearm Usage	51
	VPO Firearms	51
	Ability to Fire	52
	Suspect Firearms.....	53
Section 1.5	Other Equipment Issues	55
	Use of Body Armor.....	56
1.5.1	Body Armor	56
1.5.2	Patrol Equipment	56
1.5.3	Special Tactical Equipment.....	57
	Patrol Equipment Reports.....	57
Section 1.6	Tactical Issues.....	59
1.6.1	Overview	59
	Areas of Study	60
	Tactical Planning.....	60
1.6.2	Threat Indicators	61
	Other Tactical Issues.....	61
	Communications	61
	Threat Indicators.....	62
	Ambush.....	62
1.6.3	Assistance: Cover Officer or Backup	62
1.6.4	Critical Incident Factors	63
	Status of Assistance.....	63
	Assistance Present	63
	No Assistance Present.....	63
	Use of Cover	64
	Distance Between Suspect and Officer	64
	Verbal Tactics.....	65
	Physical Tactics.....	65
	Will to Win	65
	Use of Force	65

	Weapon Retention	66
1.6.5	Searching – Areas, Buildings, People, and Vehicles	66
1.6.6	Overview of Tactical Considerations	66
1.6.7	Final Comments.....	67
Chapter 2	Officer Safety Guidelines	69
	List of Officer Guidelines.....	69
Section 2.1	General Guidelines	70
	Types of VPO Activities Examined.....	71
	Master the Basics	71
	Be Aware of the Hands	72
	Recognize and Use Cover	72
	Utilize Safe Distances and Positions of Advantage	72
	Use Communication Systems.....	73
	Suspects Have Access to and Possess Firearms.....	73
	Gang Members Are Violent.....	73
	Know the Capabilities of Your Adversary’s Weapons.....	73
Section 2.2	Patrol Guidelines.....	75
	Physical Tactics.....	75
	Vehicle Pullovers.....	76
	Approach Stopped Vehicles with Due Caution	76
	Pedestrian Contact	77
	Consider Cover, Distance, and Force Options.....	77
	Arrest Situations.....	78
	Remember Arrest Situations are Dangerous	78
	Suspicious Persons and Investigations	79
	Recognize Your Limitations in Foot Pursuits.....	79
	Domestic Violence	80
	Control Everyone Involved In Domestic Violence	80
	Carry a Flashlight.....	80
Section 2.3	High Risk Calls/Special Operations Guidelines	81
2.3.1	Crimes-in-Progress Guidelines	81
2.3.2	Building Entry/Search Guidelines	81
	Difference Between Active Shooter and Barricaded Suspect.....	81

	Dangers Entering and Searching a Building.....	81
	Remember that Vehicle Pursuits are Inherently Dangerous.....	82
	Tactical Operations Among Law Enforcement Agencies.....	82
2.3.3	Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines	82
2.3.4	Interagency-Operational Guidelines	82
Section 2.4	Ambush and Off-Duty Incident Guidelines.....	83
2.4.1	Ambush Guidelines.....	83
2.4.2	Off-Duty Police Actions	83
	Maintain a Will to Win/Survive	83
	Equipment/Tactical Disadvantages when Off-Duty	83
Chapter 3	Peace Officer Assaults	85
Section 3.1	California Department of Justice Program.....	85
3.1.1	Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC).....	85
	LEOKA Objectives	86
	LEOKA Forms	86
3.1.2	California LEOKA Program	86
	LEOKA Statistical Limitations.....	87
Section 3.2	California Peace Officer Assault Data.....	89
3.2.1	Reported Assaults on California Peace Officers	89
3.2.2	Assault Types.....	89
	California Peace Officer Assaults 2000-2004	89
	Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted by Type of Weapon	89
3.2.3	Analysis by Type of Weapon.....	90
	Peace Officer Assaults with a Firearm	90
	Peace Officer Assaults With a Firearm - Trends	91
	Assaults by Knife/Cutting Weapons.....	91
	Assaults by Knife/Cutting Weapon - Trends	92
	Assaults by Other Dangerous Weapons.....	92
	Assaults by Other Dangerous Weapons - Trends.....	93
	Assaults by Hands, Fists or Feet	93
3.2.4	Analysis by Time of Incident	94
	Assaults by Hands, Feet, Fists - Trends	94
3.2.5	Analysis by Type of Weapon and Injury	95

	Assaults by Time of Assault	95
	Assaults by Type of Weapon and Injury	96
Section 3.3	Assault Data: Final Comments	97
3.3.1	Assault Data Recommendations.....	97
	Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted, 1994–2004 - Trends.....	97
3.3.2	California Law Enforcement Agency Participation	98
Chapter 4	Accidental Deaths	99
Section 4.1	Incident Information	99
4.1.1	Accidental Deaths Defined.....	99
4.1.2	Location and Conditions	99
	Accidental Deaths by Year2000-2004.....	99
	Accidental Deaths by Region 2000–2004.....	100
	Incidents by Time of Year.....	101
	Incidents by Day of Week	101
	Incidents by Time of Day.....	102
Section 4.2	Victim Peace Officer Profiles	103
	VPO: Physical Profile.....	103
	Rank.....	103
	Assignment	103
	Type of Agency	104
Section 4.3	Types of Accidental Deaths.....	105
4.3.1	Traffic-Related Collisions	105
	Types of Accidents by Number2000-2004	105
	Vehicle-Related Collisions	105
4.3.2	Single Vehicle Collisions	107
4.3.3	Primary Factors Contributing to Vehicle Collisions	107
	Vehicle-Related Collisions	107
	Person at Fault.....	107
4.3.4	Seatbelt Use (Restraint System).....	108
	Causes or Contributing Factors of Collisions.....	108
4.3.5	Motorcycle Patrol Collisions.....	109
4.3.6	Aerial Collisions	109
4.3.7	Other Types of Accidental Deaths.....	109

	Prevention Assessment: Motorcycle Collisions.....	109
4.3.8	Summary: Accidental Deaths.....	110
	25-Year Chart - Trends.....	110
Chapter 5	Incident Summaries	111
Section 5.1	Peace Officer Murder Summaries.....	111
5.1.1	Ambush Attacks	112
5.1.2	Arrest Situations.....	113
5.1.3	Assistance Request By Another Law Enforcement Agency	113
5.1.4	Building Entry/Search Operations.....	114
5.1.5	Crime-in-Progress.....	114
5.1.6	Disturbance Call.....	115
5.1.7	Domestic Violence Incident.....	115
5.1.8	Off-Duty Incident	115
5.1.9	Pedestrian Contact	116
5.1.10	Suspicious Persons/Circumstances.....	116
5.1.11	Vehicle Stops	117
5.1.12	Vehicle Pursuit	118
Section 5.2	Accidental Death Incident Summaries.....	119
5.2.1	Accidental Discharges	119
5.2.2	Aerial Collision	120
5.2.3	Friendly Fire Incidents.....	120
5.2.4	Industrial Incident.....	120
5.2.5	Motorcycle Patrol Traffic Collisions	121
5.2.6	Patrol Vehicle Traffic Collisions.....	122
5.2.7	Pedestrian Officers Struck by Traffic.....	125
5.2.8	Training Exercise	126
Appendix	Web Links and Web Addresses (URL)	127

Chapter 1

Felonious Deaths Study

2000–2004 Statistics

This LEOKA Report begins with tabulated statistical data and information collected from the study of the murders of 23 California peace officers during the years 2000–2004.

Section 1.1

Incident Information

This section will examine the incident variables regarding 23 California peace officer fatal assaults between 2000 and 2004.

The following table shows the year-to-year breakdown of California peace officer murders over the past 5 years.

Peace Officers Killed by Year 2000–2004

Year	Peace Officers Killed
2000	2
2001	6
2002	4
2003	6
2004	5
Total	23

Note: A comparison of the last two 5-year periods found that 10 fewer peace officers were murdered in California during the years 2000–2004. This is a decrease of 33%.

1.1.1

Locations and Conditions

The following map and tables represent the locations and conditions at the time of the fatal incidents.

**Peace Officer Murders
by Region
2000–2004**

This map divides California into 4 regions to illustrate the distribution of peace officers murders. The regions are designated as follows:



Northern Region: 3 Deaths	
2000	0
2001	2
2002	1
2003	0
2004	0
Total	3

SF Bay Region: 4 Deaths	
2000	1
2001	1
2002	0
2003	1
2004	1
Total	4

Central Region: 3 Deaths	
2000	0
2001	1
2002	1
2003	0
2004	1
Total	3

Southern Region: 13 Deaths	
2000	1
2001	2
2002	2
2003	5
2004	3
Total	13

Note: When examining the last 5-year 2000–2004, and the 10-year 1995–2004 periods, California’s southern region had the most peace officer murders with 13 of the 23 murders between 2000–2004, or 57%, and 33 of the 56 murders between 1995–2004, or 59%.

Incidents by Community

This table displays the general geographic locations of the California peace officers killed.

Type of Community	Victim Officers
Urban	16
Suburban	5
Rural	2
Total	23

Note: Urban areas with greater populations experienced 16 of the 23 murders, or 70%.

Incidents by Location

This table contains the types of locations reported.

Type of Location	Victim Officers
Residential	12
Surface Streets	8
Commercial	3
Total	23

Note: Residential neighborhoods accounted for 12 of the 23 murders, or 52%. The surface streets category included 1 commercial, 1 rural, and 6 residential neighborhoods, while the commercial property category included a gas station, hotel, and military credit union.

Lighting Conditions

This table identifies the lighting conditions that played a factor and the number of deaths associated with those conditions.

Lighting Conditions	Victim Officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low light or no light negatively affected the peace officer's ability to see the suspect's firearm. Darkness provided the suspect concealment as the victim peace officer approached 	3

▲ **Conclusion:** Lighting conditions were identified as a factor in 3 peace officer deaths, or 13%. One incident resulted in 2 deaths, while the other incident involved 1 death. Both incidents required the victim peace officers to enter and search buildings, moving from lighted areas to darkened areas where the suspects were concealed. Building entry and search training should be conducted during various low light and no light conditions.

Chapter 1: Felonious Deaths Study

Weather Conditions

The majority of the murders, 22 of 23 peace officers, or 96%, were killed during clear and dry weather conditions. Although 1 officer was fatally assaulted while it was raining, the rain was not determined to be a factor in the officer’s murder.

Time of Year

This table shows the seasonal distribution of the 23 peace officer felonious deaths throughout the year.

Season	Victim Officers
Winter (Dec/Jan/Feb)	2
Spring (Mar/Apr/May)	10
Summer (Jun/Jul/Aug)	7
Fall (Sep/Oct/Nov)	4
Total	23

Incidents by Day of Week

This table shows the number of incidents by day of week.

Day of Week	No. of Incidents	Victim Officers
Monday	2	2
Tuesday	5	5
Wednesday	2	2
Thursday	3*	4
Friday	2	2
Saturday	6	6
Sunday	2	2
Total	22	23

***Note:** In 2001, 2 peace officers were killed in a single incident.

▲ **Conclusion:** Although the study found that no reasonable assumption could be made that any one day is safer than another, it was recognized that 6 of the 22 incidents, or 27%, occurred on a Saturday. It was further noted that the Saturday murders were equally divided between day and evening hours (3 each.)

**Incidents
by Time of Day**

This table shows the number of victim officers feloniously killed according to time of day over a 24-hour period during 2-hour increments. This model is based on the same design and methodology used in the annual United States Department of Justice [*Uniform Crime Report on Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted*](#).

24-Hour Time	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
00:01–02:00	-	-	1	-	-	1
02:01–04:00	-	-	-	-	-	-
04:01–06:00	-	1	-	-	1	2
06:01–08:00	-	-	-	-	-	-
08:01–10:00	-	1	-	1	-	2
10:01–12:00	-	-	2	2	-	4
12:01–14:00	-	-	-	1	1	2
14:01–16:00	1	1	-	-	1	3
16:01–18:00	-	-	-	1	-	1
18:01–20:00	-	3*	-	1	1	5
20:01–22:00	-	-	-	-	1	1
22:01–24:00	1	-	1	-	-	2
Total	2	6	4	6	5	23

■ Indicates hours of darkness.

***Note:** In 2001 at 18:41 hours, 2 peace officers were killed in 1 incident.

▲ **Conclusion:** Peace officer murders occurred throughout all hours of the day. However, it is important to note that 11 of the 23 officers, or 48%, were killed during the hours of darkness or near darkness.

1.1.2 Activities at Time of Incident

The following tables depict the type of contact, who initiated the contact, the victim officers’ involved activity, and the length of time at the scene.

Incidents by Type of Contact

This table shows the number of incidents and victim peace officers by the type of law enforcement contact.

Type of Contact	No. of Incidents	Victim Officers
Vehicle pullovers	5	5
Ambushes	4	4
Building entries	2	2
Suspicious persons/ circumstances	2	2
Arrest situations	2	2
Assistance requests by a federal agency	1	1
Crimes in progress	1	1
Disturbance calls	1	1
Domestic violence	1	1
Pedestrian contacts	1	1
Off-duty incidents	1	1
Vehicle pursuits	1	1
Total	22	23

▲ *Conclusion:* All law enforcement contacts have various levels of danger. However, over a 10-year period, 1995–2004, suspicious persons or circumstances and arrest situations resulted in the most fatal assaults of California peace officers

Initiation of Incidents

This table identifies who initiated the original contact.

Initiated by	Victim Officers
Victim peace officer	8
Dispatch	4
Suspect	4
Community member	4
Other peace officer	3
Total	23

▲ *Conclusion:* Eight of the 23 victim peace officers, or 35%, were killed when they initiated contact. Self-initiated contacts can be very dangerous. Officers must maintain 360 degree awareness, utilizing safe response, movement, and positioning tactics.

Activity at Time of Attack

This table lists the officer’s primary activity at the moment of the attack.

Activity	Victim Officers
Searching a structure	4
Approaching a vehicle	2
Face-to-face contact with suspect	2
Foot pursuit	2
Arriving at scene, trespass investigation	1
Crossing street after court appearance	1
Entering a structure	1
Fueling police vehicle	1
Handcuffing an arrestee	1
Redeploying after attempting structure entry	1
Reloading behind partial cover	1
Running to avoid being hit by pursued stolen vehicle	1
Riding bicycle (off duty)	1
Searching a suspect	1
Sitting as passenger in a moving, unmarked vehicle	1
Standing next to traffic violator’s vehicle	1
Subduing an arrestee	1
Total	23

▲ **Conclusion:** During the past 10 years, 1995–2004, the following activities occurred most frequently at the time of the peace officer attacks:

Face to face contacts	10 peace officers	18%
Approaching a structure	7 peace officers	13%
Searching a structure	5 peace officers	9%

Chapter 1: Felonious Deaths Study

**Length of Time
at Incident**

This table shows the time spent at the scene by 19 of the 23 victim peace officers, or 83%, before they were attacked. The time is unknown for 4 victim officers as they were working alone and there were no witnesses to their murders.

Minutes at Scene before Attack	Victim Officers
00:00 – 01:00	10
01:01 – 02:00	2
02:01 – 04:00	2
04:01 – 06:00	0
06:01 – 09:00	1
09:01 – 39:59	0
40:00 – 60:00	3
105:00	1
Unknown	4
Total	23

▲ *Conclusion:* The first minute after arrival was the most deadly to peace officers, as 10 of the 23 officers, or 44%, were killed within that time. The use of contact and cover principles, in conjunction with officer safety tactics, are critical to officer survival.

Hours into Shift

There were no discernible patterns, factors, or trends based on when the felonious incident occurred during victim officers' shifts.

**Continuous Days
Worked**

There were no discernible patterns, factors, or trends based on the number of continuous days worked by victim officers.

1.1.3 Additional Persons Present

The following information shows the other persons present at the time of the incident in addition to the victim peace officers.

This table identifies the number of additional peace officers present during the 21 on-duty incidents where 22 peace officers were murdered. It does not include 1 off-duty incident where 1 officer was murdered.

Additional Peace Officers Present

Additional Officers Present	No. of Incidents
0	11
1	6
2	2
3	1
4 or more	2
Total	22

▲ *Conclusion:* Eleven of the 22 victim peace officers, or 49%, were murdered without a fellow officer present. Law enforcement agencies should constantly reassess dispatch procedures and provide dispatcher training to identify multiple-unit calls for service. Furthermore, officers, as well as field supervisors and watch commanders monitoring shift activities, should also take responsibility for decisions regarding cover or backup assignments.

Additional Suspects Present

This table identifies the number of additional suspects present during the 22 incidents where 23 peace officers were murdered. This includes 1 off-duty incident where 1 officer was fatally assaulted.

Additional Suspects Present	No. of Incidents
0	20
1	1
2	1
Total	22

Witnesses Present

The number of witnesses present during the 22 incidents ranged from none to as high as 30. The study shows that the presence of witnesses may not prevent a suspect from killing a peace officer. Additionally, peace officers should constantly reassess behavior during face-to-face contacts, determining whether anyone may present a control concern or danger to community members, responding peace officers, and the officer handling the incident.

1.1.4 Agency Changes as a Result of Incident

As a result of the 23 murdered peace officers, some agencies reported implementing changes in equipment, policy, procedures, and training.

**Reported Changes
in Equipment,
Policy, Procedures,
and Training**

- Implemented Changes**
- Certain patrol beats will be staffed with 2 officers in a patrol vehicle
 - Outside agencies must conform to safe procedures when tactical operations are conducted
 - A minimum of 2 officers will be present while fueling vehicles at night
 - New body armor was issued
 - Tactical approach training was reinforced

▲ *Conclusion:* Of the 22 incidents studied where 23 peace officers were murdered, 16 incidents, or 69%, resulted in no changes being implemented by the affected agencies. In fact, these agencies reported that the data gathered was intended to validate current policies and procedures.

Section 1.2

Victim Peace Officer Information

The 23 victim peace officers (VPO) were from 18 law enforcement agencies. The following information is a summary of victim officer characteristics.

Factors Contributing to Peace Officer Deaths

- Attacks – Ambush, deliberate, sudden, and unprovoked
- Complacency – before and during the incident
- Lack of coordination among different agencies
- Failure to communicate vital information
- Failure to recognize danger signs
- Overconfidence – before and during incident
- Tactics – improper and unsafe

1.2.1

Victim Peace Officer Demographics

The following tables represent victim peace officer demographics at the time of the incidents.

Physical Profile

This table is a summary of the physical characteristics of the 23 victim peace officers in this study.

Physical Profile of Victim Peace Officers	
Age	24 to 61 yrs
Height	5' 8" to 6' 4"
Weight	150 to 252 lbs
Sex	Male

Note: In the past two LEOKA Reports, 1995-2004, there were no female peace officers murdered. In fact, the last female California peace officer was murdered in 1994.

Ethnicity

This table provides a breakdown of the ethnicity of the 23 victim peace officers.

Ethnicity	Victim Officers
Caucasian	17
African-American	3
Hispanic	2
Asian	1
Total	23

Law Enforcement Experience

Law enforcement experience is defined as time served in a sworn capacity, including time spent with another agency. The law enforcement experience of the 23 victim peace officers ranged from 10 months to 31 years. This table identifies the victim peace officers' law enforcement experience.

Years of Experience	Victim Officers
Less than 1 year	2
1-4 years	6
5-10 years	4
11-20 years	6
21-30 years	4
31 years	1
Total	23

▲ **Conclusion:** It should be noted that 15 of the 23 victim peace officers, or 65%, had 5 or more years of experience. In fact, 11 of the 23 peace officers, or 47%, had 11 or more years of experience. Complacency of tenured personnel should remain an area of attention for leaders, managers, supervisors, and trainers.

Section 1.2: Victim Peace Officer Information

Rank

This table shows the breakdown of the victim peace officers by rank.

Rank	Victim Officers
Officer / deputy	19
Detective / investigator	2
Lieutenant	1
Captain	1
Total	23

Note: The lieutenant was murdered while assisting another victim peace officer during a building search. The captain was killed during an off-duty incident where he was the victim of a robbery.

Assignment

Twenty-two of 23 victim peace officers, or 96%, were murdered when involved in on-duty activities. The other victim peace officer was killed in an off-duty law enforcement incident. The majority of the peace officers fatally assaulted, 14 of 23, or 61%, were working patrol assignments, while 2 victim officers were assigned traffic duties as motorcycle officers.

Assignment	Victim Officers
Patrol/traffic	16
Gang enforcement	2
Administrative	1
Canine	1
Investigations	1
Off-duty	1
Undercover	1
Total	23

Type of Unit

Fourteen of 16, or 88%, of the victim peace officers assigned to Patrol/Traffic were working alone. One-person patrol can be one of the most dangerous assignments for officers.

Type of Unit	Victim Officers
One-person patrol	14
Two-person patrol	2
Total	16

VPO Physical Condition

Five of the 23 victim peace officers, or 22%, were involved in a physical altercation with a suspect. Consequently, the physical characteristics: age, height, and weight of the officers and suspects are compared below.

Altercation	Age		Height		Weight	
	Officer	Suspect	Officer	Suspect	Officer	Suspect
Incident 1	50	34	5'9	5'9	185	160
Incident 2	27	28	6'1	5'8	196	190
Incident 3	33	25	6'4	5'9	220	230
Incident 4	46	40	5'9	5'5	215	170
Incident 5	45	40	5'8	6'0	150	206

▲ *Conclusion:* In the aforementioned incidents, it was noted that the suspect was younger than the victim officer in 3 of the 5 altercations, taller than the victim officer in 1 altercation, and heavier than the victim officer in 2 altercations. Based on this data, it is inconclusive as to whether the physical condition of the victim peace officers was a contributing factor.

VPO Cause of Death

The cause of death for 21 victim peace officers was gunshot wounds from handguns, rifles (including assault rifles), and shotguns. One victim peace officer was struck intentionally and killed by the suspect's vehicle while another peace officer was disarmed and killed with the peace officer's own baton. This table provides a breakdown of the weapons used.

Type of Weapon	Victim Officers
Handgun	14
Rifle (including assault rifles)	6
Shotgun	1
Baton	1
Vehicle	1
Total	23

▲ *Conclusion:* Firearms continue to be the primary weapon used to murder California peace officers. Twenty-one of 23 victim peace officers, or 91%, were killed with a handgun, rifle, or shotgun. Officers should remain vigilant in watching and controlling an offender's hands.

1.2.2 Officer Safety Responses

In 9 of the 23 victim peace officer murders, or 39%, it was noted that the victim officer's attitude toward officer safety practices was a factor in the officer's death. The following officer safety errors were identified as causal factors:

Officer Safety Errors

- Attitude: careless or complacent
- Awareness: not paying attention
- Backup: failure to request and wait
- Control: failure to control bystanders and suspects
- Cover: ineffective use and unsafe positions
- Danger signs: ignoring dangerous behavior
- Equipment: failure to carry basic items (flashlight)
- Overconfidence: denying the opportunity
- Resources: failure to utilize
- Search techniques: improper and unsafe
- "Threat zones": not recognizing and avoiding

Survival Issues

The following factors were identified as officer safety and tactical issues of concern in the fatal attacks that occurred from 2000–2004.

- Possession of proper equipment (flashlight)
- Awareness and control of family members and spectators
- Better coordination and communication among agencies
- Better positioning
- Better use of cover
- Anticipation and avoidance of “threat zones”
- Awareness of the capabilities of an adversary’s weapon(s)
- Awareness of surrounding areas and potential for danger
- Ability to maintain control and get assistance
- Refusal to perform “routine” traffic stops
- Recognition of danger signs
- Adherence to ‘cover’ or ‘back-up’ requirements for high risk situations
- Use of body armor
- Use of resources (air support, Supervisor, K-9, SWAT, CNT, etc.)
- Wait for backup
- When off duty, when possible, take no action, be a witness, and be armed

Potential for Violence

Fourteen of the victim peace officers, or 61%, were aware of a potential hazard when they initiated or responded to the incident. Five of the victim peace officers, or 22%, had knowledge of the possibility that weapons were present prior to the initial contact with the suspect.

Section 1.2: Victim Peace Officer Information

Suspect Known to VPO

In 4 of the cases, or 17%, the victim peace officer knew the suspect, and in 2 cases, the victim peace officer knew the suspect had a potential for violence. Three of the victim peace officers had previous contact with the suspect. However, none of these prior contacts were of a violent nature.

▲ *Conclusion:* After evaluating the information in the Potential for Violence and Suspect Known to VPO sections, peace officers should enhance their tactical decisions and tactical choices regarding moving, positioning, and using cover prior to contact.

Physical Altercation

Three incidents involved a physical altercation and struggle:

- Arrest situation
- Domestic violence
- Vehicle pullover

The vehicle pullover required the officers to restrain an arrestee after an “all-out” struggle. In another incident, the domestic violence suspect took the victim peace officer’s baton and murdered the peace officer. Consequently, the responding backup officer shot and killed the suspect.

Officer Safety Practices

Data from the reporting agencies indicated that 20 of 23 victim peace officers were rated standard or higher for their officer safety practices. Three agencies indicated “unknown.”

1.2.3 Training Issues

There is no doubt that training is the single most important factor in preventing the injury and death of peace officers. Thus, POST produces this report to provide statistical information and analysis that will enhance and improve training. Hopefully, the recognition and use of the information about peace officers accidentally killed, assaulted, and murdered will be valuable to those involved in the prevention of these tragedies.

POST Basic Course

All 23 victim peace officers graduated from a POST Regular Basic Course training facility. The time between graduation and the fatal incident varied dramatically from as little as 9 months to 31 years.

Firearms Qualifications

The following data describes the firearm qualification profiles of the victim peace officers as reported by the participating agencies.

Primary Firearm Qualification

- The majority of the victim peace officers had qualified within 1 to 4 months of the fatal incident. The most recent qualification was the day of the incident and the longest period was 14 months.

Backup Firearm Qualification

- Seven agencies reported the victim peace officers had qualified with their backup firearm. The time between qualification and the fatal incident ranged from 1 to 60 months.

Shotgun Qualification

- Nineteen agencies reported shotgun qualification training. Qualification times ranged from 1 to 38 months, with the majority being within 1 year.

Night Range Qualification

- Eleven victim peace officers qualified within 1 to 24 months of the incident. Reports indicate 12 of the victim peace officers may not have received any low light/no-light qualification training.

▲ *Conclusion:* Although each agency establishes firearm qualification standards, there are significant differences in the time periods when the victim officers completed firearm qualification.

Firearm Qualification Type	Time Elapsed
Primary	Day of incident to 14 months
Backup	1-60 months
Shotgun	1-38 months
Low Light/No Light	1-24 months

▲ *Conclusion:* This data indicates that law enforcement should continually review current firearm qualification standards for all personnel, especially law enforcement individuals in ranks or assignments where firearm qualification is relaxed or not monitored.

Defensive Tactics

The data gathered regarding “defensive tactics” includes training in arrest and control techniques, impact weapons, tactical role-playing, weaponless defense, and weapon retention techniques. As was the case in gathering data, this report reflects only shared information and several agencies indicated the information was unknown.

Defensive Tactics/Weapon Retention

- On 20 occasions, it was reported that victim peace officers had received in-service defensive tactics training. The time span between this training and the fatal incidents ranged from 1 month to over 17 years, and is reflected below.

Impact Weapons

- On 22 occasions, it was reported that the victim peace officer had received in-service impact weapons training. The time span between this training and the fatal incidents ranged from 1 month to 9 years, and is reflected below.

Arrest Methods

- On twenty occasions, it was reported that the victim peace officers had received in-service arrest and control techniques training. The time span between the training and the fatal incident ranged from 1 month to 21 years, and is reflected below.

Role Playing

- On 15 occasions, it was reported that the victim peace officer had received in-service tactical role player training. The time span between the training ranged from 4 months to 10 years, and is reflected below.

▲ **Conclusion:** As previously mentioned, law enforcement agencies should continually review their defensive tactics training standards and practices. The following tables provide information as to the victim peace officer’s defensive tactics training frequency.

Defensive Tactics Training

Type of Training	Time Periods
Defensive tactics / weapons retention	One month to 17 years
Impact weapons	One month to 9 years
Arrest methods	One month to 21 years
Role playing	Four months to 10 years

Chapter 1: Felonious Deaths Study

Defensive Tactics Training
(cont)

Years between In-service Training & Tactical Incident	Defensive Tactics/ Role Playing		Arrest Methods		Weapon Retention		Impact Weapons	
	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents
1	14	61%	15	65%	12	52%	9	39%
2	1	4%	4	17%	4	17%	0	0%
3	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
4	2	9%	1	4%	1	4%	1	4%
5	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	1	4%
6-10	1	4%	1	4%	1	4%	3	13%
10-21	1	4%	0	0%	2	9%	0	0%
None received	3	13%	1	4%	3	13%	8	35%
Total	23	100%*	23	100%*	23	100%*	23	100%*

*Note: Percentages are rounded to the closest whole number and may not total 100%.

Number of incidents
 Percent of incidents

Section 1.3 Suspect Information

In this study, 25 suspects were involved in 22 incidents, which resulted in the murder of 23 California peace officers between 2000 and 2004. The suspects were males, and 23 of the 25, or 92%, had firearms in their possession. Two of the suspects were killed by a victim peace officer; and 3 were killed by other officers at the scene. Three suspects were killed between 3 and 6 days following the incident. One of these incidents involved investigators on a follow-up search for the suspect, and the other 2 incidents were SWAT operations.

1.3.1 Suspect Demographics

The following tables represent suspect demographics at the time of the incidents.

There is no such thing as an “average suspect.” In reviewing this information, one must recognize that the profile could be misleading. This table shows the range of physical characteristics of the suspects.

Physical Profile of Suspects	
Age	16 to 47 yrs
Height	5'4" to 6'1"
Weight	130 to 230 lbs
Sex	Male

This table shows the ethnic backgrounds of the 25 suspects.

Ethnicity	Suspects
Hispanic	10
African-American	9
Caucasian	6
Total	25

Note: Two of the suspects were involved in each of these incidents.

Suspect Physical Profile

Suspect Ethnicity

Criminal History

The chart below reflects the suspects’ significant criminal histories. Many of these violent criminals were familiar with police procedures and how they would interact with law enforcement personnel. Most of these individuals were no strangers to the criminal justice system, with arrest records ranging from 1 to 7 arrests.

Criminal History	Suspects	Percentage
Criminal record	24	96%
Multiple arrests	16	64%
Gang affiliation	13	52%
Violent contacts with law enforcement	6	24%
Parolee	4	16%
Warrants	3	12%

Types of Arrest and Parole Status

Arrest records for 16 of the 25 suspects, or 64%, reflected criminal histories with multiple arrests. Many of the suspects had been arrested several times for the same type of crime. Four of the 25, or 16%, with criminal records were on parole, and 3 of the 25 suspects, or 12%, had outstanding arrest warrants at the time of the incident. Although the information does not reflect the total number of times a suspect was arrested for a specific crime, the 25 suspects accounted for more than 125 prior arrests, amounting to an average of 5 prior arrests per suspect.

Criminal History of Prior Arrests	Suspects
Crimes of violence	24
Theft/property crimes	16
Firearms violation	13
Narcotics	6

1.3.2 The Attacks

The following charts provide information regarding the attacks on the victim peace officers.

Type of Attack

This table represents the types of attacks that occurred in the 22 incidents where 23 California peace officers were murdered.

Type of Attack	No. of Incidents
Spontaneous	14
Planned	6
Unknown	2

Note: In 2 of the planned attacks, 2 victim peace officers were killed in a single incident.

▲ **Conclusion:** Fourteen of the 22 attacks, or 64%, were spontaneous. Peace officers should remain ever alert to the possibility of an assault that could result in a serious bodily injury or death.

Reason for Attack

As shown below, in 18 of the 23 peace officer murders, or 78%, the primary reason for the attack was to facilitate escape or resist arrest.

Reason for Attack	Victim Officers
Facilitate escape/resist arrest	18
Random violence	2
Unknown	2
Interference with a third party	1

Under the Influence

As shown below, 6 of the 25 suspects, or 24%, were found to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the incident. In 21 incidents, the suspects' use of drugs or alcohol was reported as unknown.

Substance	Suspects
Alcohol	3
Alcohol/Opiate	2
Stimulants	1

1.4 Equipment Issues: Firearms

This section covers the types of firearms used by both the victim peace officers and the suspects; the number of gunshot wounds sustained by both, and whether weapon concealment was a significant factor contributing to the cause of death.

1.4.1 Types of Firearms Used

The following firearms information illustrates the types of firearms carried by the victim peace officers and suspects at the time of the incidents.

Seven of the 23 peace officers murdered, or 30%, were killed with rifles, shotguns, or assault-type weapons such as the AK-47. This is a 7.1% decrease from the previous 5-year study. The following tables identify the number of times that the victim officer was shot and when shoulder weapons were used to murder the officer. Nine of the 21 victim officers, or 43%, were killed with a single shot.

Firearm Usage

No. of Times Shot	Victim Officers
1	9
2	3
3	2
4	1
6	1
7	1
9	1
10	1
13	1
14	1
Total	21

Shoulder Weapons	Victim Officers	Shots
Assault Rifles	5	23
Rifle (.30 cal)	1	1
Shotgun (.00 buck)	1	1

VPO Firearms

The 23 murdered peace officers were armed with semi-automatic pistols at the time of death. One officer was additionally armed with a shotgun. The table below identifies the handguns carried by the victim peace officers.

23 Victim Officer's Handguns

- Armed with semi-automatic pistols as their primary handgun
- The handgun calibers included 9 mm, 40 caliber, and .45 caliber

Handgun Caliber	Victim Officers
9 mm	8
.40 caliber	8
.45 caliber	7

It was reported that 4 of the victim peace officers, or 17%, carried backup weapons. The back-up weapons were not deployed and are not considered a factor in the murders.

Ability to Fire

Only 7 of the 23 victim peace officers, or 30%, were able to fire their weapons during their murders. In fact, 1 officer using a shotgun fired 4 rounds and fired an unknown number of handgun rounds.

Rounds Fired by 6 Victim Officers

1 officer fired:	16 shots
2 officers fired:	11 shots
1 officer fired:	5 shots
1 officer fired:	3 shots
1 officer fired:	2 shots

▲ **Conclusion:** Sixteen of the 23 victim peace officers, or 70%, did not fire their weapons. Although the use of deadly force is an individual decision based upon the law, agency policy, and individual circumstances, training should consistently reinforce agency use of force policies and practices.

Suspect Firearms

Twenty-three of the 25 suspects, or 92%, used a firearm to murder 21 victim peace officers. This table shows the types of firearms used by the suspects.

Firearms	Caliber	Victim Officers
Rifle	.30	1
Assault rifle	-	5
Shotgun	12 gauge	1
Revolver	.38	1
	.357	1
Semi-automatic	9mm	6
	10mm	1
	.38	2
	.40	1
	.45	2
Total	-	21

Note: Two officers were killed with one 9mm semi-automatic.

▲ **Conclusion:** This study shows that the majority of suspects continue to use handguns to murder peace officers. Peace officers should be vigilant in watching the hands of suspects, remain attentive to areas where suspects traditionally conceal firearms on their person and in vehicles, and remain current on information regarding disguised firearms.

Section 1.5

Other Equipment Issues

- ▶ **FACT: Firearms continue to pose the greatest threat to officer safety.**
- ▶ **FACT: Body armor is the single most effective piece of passive safety equipment that a peace officer can utilize.**
- ▶ **FACT: Body armor should be mandated for all uniformed officers.**

As documented in past LEOKA Reports, two issues remain the focus of the Equipment section:

- Is safety equipment available?
- Is safety equipment properly used?

For this report, agency representatives were asked about availability of equipment, effective use of equipment, and an explanation of how the equipment, or the lack thereof, was a factor in the murder of the peace officer. Unless it was a contributing factor to the murder, agencies did not report information on most equipment issues.

Although no data was reported, the following types of equipment and topics are reviewed due to their relevance to officer safety.

- Body armor
- Patrol equipment
- Special tactical equipment

1.5.1

Body Armor

This section provides detailed information about the use of body armor.

Twenty-one of the 22 victim peace officers, or 95% who were murdered on duty, were wearing body armor. One victim officer, a plain-clothes detective, was not wearing body armor.

Use of Body Armor

Body Armor Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One victim peace officer was off-duty and was not wearing body armor when shot with a handgun ■ One victim peace officer was on duty and was not wearing body armor ■ Unfortunately, in 2 incidents, body armor was defeated by the handgun ammunition

▲ *Conclusion:* The number of peace officers choosing not to wear body armor has declined.

LEOKA Reports	Not Wearing Body Armor
2000-2004	9%
1995-1999	16%
1990-1994	42%
1987-1989	21%

1.5.2

Patrol Equipment

Excluding firearms, this section covers law enforcement patrol equipment that is traditionally carried by peace officers while on duty. The victim officers’ assignments were reported as follows:

- Eighteen of the victim peace officers, or 78%, were in standard uniform and performing patrol functions at the time of the incident
- One victim peace officer was off-duty
- One victim peace officer was working plainclothes gang enforcement
- One victim peace officer was working as an administrative lieutenant
- One victim peace officer was a detective conducting a follow-up investigation
- One victim peace officer was undercover

Patrol Equipment Reports

Patrol equipment is generally located on an equipment belt and includes ammunition, chemical agent, flashlight, handcuffs, holster, impact weapon, portable radio, and other patrol equipment.

Ammunition
■ There were no fatal assaults where this equipment was identified as a factor
Chemical Agent
■ There were no fatal assaults where this equipment was identified as a factor
Flashlight
■ Nine of the 23 incidents, or 39%, happened during the hours of darkness. Agencies did not indicate flashlights were a factor in the deaths of the victim peace officers. However, the LEOKA committee identified lack of lighting as a causal factor in 2 incidents where victim officers entered a darkened area during search activities
Handcuffs
■ There were no fatal assaults where this equipment was identified as a factor
Impact Weapons
■ There was one case where a victim peace officer used an impact weapon. Unfortunately, in this incident the baton was taken from the victim officer by the suspect and used to kill the victim peace officer
Portable Radio
■ There were no fatal assaults where this equipment was identified as a factor

1.5.3 Special Tactical Equipment

This category includes equipment commonly considered special operations or entry team equipment, including ballistic helmets, tactical entry team body armor, ballistic shields, mirror devices, canines, and other tactical chemical agent deployment devices. No tactical equipment issues were discovered in this study.

Section 1.6

Tactical Issues

This section will review the known tactical decisions made by the victim peace officers and identify significant training issues.

1.6.1

Overview

Incidents involving patrol activities, planned arrest and search warrant operations, and follow-up investigations for wanted criminals were evaluated, including whether victim peace officers were working alone or with assisting personnel.

Of the 23 victim peace officers who were fatally assaulted, 18 or 78% of these were involved in patrol activities. Specifically, 15 were working a one-officer patrol unit, 2 were assigned motorcycle duties, and 1 was serving as a K-9 patrol unit. Eight of the 15 one-officer patrol units, or 53%, did not request assistance. Six of the one-officer patrol units had no chance to call for assistance.

In the incidents where the victim peace officers could not call for assistance, 4 were handling vehicle stops, 1 was ambushed while fueling his vehicle, and 1 peace officer was ambushed outside of a courthouse after testifying. The remaining 2 incidents where the victim officers did not request assistance involved a disturbance call and a trespass complaint. Furthermore, it was noted that the victim peace officer at the disturbance call arrived prior to the assigned secondary unit, unfortunately engaging the suspect alone.

Areas of Study

The following table identifies tactical considerations and options that were critical factors during the peace officer murders.

Tactical Considerations and Responsibilities

- Assistance – requesting, directing, and utilizing
- Communication issues
- Control, search, and arrest techniques
- Mental conditioning – crisis rehearsal/will to win
- Tactical approach, movement, and position
- Tactical cover
- Tactical planning
- Threat recognition
- Use of force equipment/options
- Verbal/physical tactics
- Weapon retention

Tactical Planning

Tactical planning is paramount to the safety and welfare of a peace officer. Whether working alone or with a partner, peace officers should continuously develop and evaluate their tactical course of action. Decisions are the result of the officer analyzing the information received and their personal observations of the location and people involved. A failure to plan may be incurable, placing the officer in a position of disadvantage. Additionally, incident debriefings enable peace officers to develop law enforcement knowledge and skills and become more effective tactical planners. Unfortunately, this 5-year study of felonious peace officer deaths complimented previous LEOKA Reports' findings. Many of the incidents might have been prevented through safer tactical planning and response.

Other Tactical Issues

This table contains reported factors that directly or indirectly contributed to the death of peace officers in this study.

Tactical Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A position of advantage was abandoned due to foot pursuit ■ A tactical plan was neither developed nor followed ■ Although assistance was requested, action was initiated without backup ■ Assistance was not requested when it should have been ■ Danger zones were un-safely entered and not left safely ■ Hazardous situations resulted in unsafe movement and entry ■ Law enforcement resources were not requested/utilized (Air Support, K-9, Supervisor, and SWAT) ■ Potential threats in surrounding areas were not recognized. ■ Potential threats were not communicated ■ Tactical plan was not coordinated between law enforcement agencies

1.6.2 Threat Indicators

Failure to recognize and communicate danger placed the victim peace officers in various positions of disadvantage, and consequently, the suspects were able to kill the peace officers. The following concerns were identified so that peace officers could recognize potentially unsafe situations and effectively communicate with dispatch and other peace officers.

Communications

The following communication issues were listed as a factor in 3 of the murders.

Reported Communication Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Officer-to-dispatch communication was inadequate before and during a vehicle pullover ■ Officer-to-officer communication was inadequate before and during a building search ■ Timely stolen vehicle information was not received

Threat Indicators

Threat indicators were evaluated. Unfortunately, in 5 of the 22 incidents, or 24%, the murdered peace officers did not recognize that the following behaviors presented ever-increasing danger to their safety and welfare, and they failed to properly react and respond.

Threat Indicators and Warning Signs

- Failure to comply with verbal commands
- History of previous criminal activity
- Non-verbal and verbal communication – anger, body language, flight, and nervousness
- Overt acts – drawing a firearm, failure to stop, firing at the officer, and resisting arrest
- Presence of a firearm
- Reports of “shots fired”
- Suspicious behavior, circumstances, locations, and people

Ambush

Unfortunately, threat indicators were present in 1 of the 2 ambush incidents resulting in the deaths of 2 peace officers.

1.6.3 Assistance: Cover Officer or Backup

In this and past LEOKA Reports, assistance is defined as any situation where a peace officer decided that additional law enforcement personnel were necessary to protect community members, responding peace officers, and the involved peace officer. This tactical concept is also known by other terminology such as “backup, cover, follow-up, or guard.”

In 13 of the 22 incidents, or 59%, the victim peace officers requested assistance. However, in 9, or almost half of the incidents, the victim peace officers did not request assistance. When assistance was requested, the initiating request was made by a community member on 1 occasion, a dispatcher on another occasion, and by peace officers on 11 occasions. Additionally, in 6 of the 22 incidents, or 27%, the assisting officers arrived prior to the victim peace officer’s demise.

Status of Assistance

Status of Assistance	No. of Incidents	Victim Officers
Assistance not requested	9	9
Assistance requested	13	14
Total	22	23

Assistance Present

Although assistance was present in 6 of 22, or 27% of the incidents, spontaneous ambush attacks, leaving positions of advantage, and tactical mistakes prevented the victim peace officers from requesting assistance. Peace officers should remain aware of suspicious behavior, circumstances, locations, and people that could potentially result in spontaneous and unprovoked ambush attacks, anticipating the potential need for assistance. Additionally, peace officers should receive training in tactical planning and decision making to minimize and prevent tactical mistakes during critical incidents.

Factors	No. of Incidents
Ambush — spontaneous attack	4
Left cover	1
Tactical mistake	1
Total	6

No Assistance Present

During 11 of the 22 incidents, or 50%, the victim peace officers were working alone. In the aforementioned incidents, the victim peace officers handled ambushes, a trespass investigation, a vehicle pursuit, and vehicle pullovers. Although many peace officers work alone, all peace officers should be cognizant that any observed or responded to activity can become dangerous at a moment's notice. Peace officers should not hesitate to request backup. Additionally, peace officers should continually monitor radio traffic, considering whether or not to cover another officer involved in law enforcement activity.

1.6.4 Critical Incident Factors

The following tactical situations occurred during the 22 incidents where 23 California peace officers were murdered. These circumstances took place either before, during, or after the tragic incidents.

- Movement**
- Failure to control a suspect, allowing the suspect to get too close
 - Failure to control a suspect, losing visual contact
 - Failure to control suspects while searching another suspect
 - Failure to guard their partner during a search (contact/cover)
 - Failure to use backup during pursuits
 - Leaving cover to acquire a greater field of vision
 - Leaving cover while 1 suspect was still in hiding
 - Leaving cover, “rushing in” to an incident
 - Leaving cover during a dangerous vehicle stop
 - Moving unsafely past an open window
 - Selecting a position that prevented other tactical options

Use of Cover

Lack of effective cover and safe use of cover continues to be a causal factor in California peace officer murders. Peace officers should recognize the difference between concealment and cover. This includes learning how to take a position that offers minimal exposure to physical threats in a critical incident. Additionally, peace officers should learn to properly and safely search buildings and open areas.

Distance Between Suspect and Officer

Between 2000 and 2004, distances between the California victim peace officer and the suspect ranged from 0 to 100 feet. However, 10 of 23 victim peace officers, or 43%, were murdered at a distance between 0 and 4 feet. In fact, 13 of the 23 murdered officers, or 57%, were killed within 10 feet of their attacker. The previous 1995-1999 LEOKA Report noted that 55% of the murdered peace officers were also killed at a distance of less than 10 feet from the suspect. Peace officers should be reminded that cover and distance are vital allies to an officer’s safety. Approaching suspects can be dangerous;

peace officers should consider verbal tactics in directing suspects to recognized positions of disadvantage.

Suspect's Distance from Officer	Victim Officers
0 to 4 feet	10
5 to 10 feet	3
11 to 20 feet	5
21 to 99 feet	1
100 or more feet	1
Unknown	3
Total	23

Verbal Tactics

It was reported that verbal tactics were not effective in 5 of the 23 incidents, or 22%. Peace officers should participate in refresher and scenario training where effective, safe use of tactical terminology is emphasized.

Physical Tactics

Although only 1 of the 23 murdered peace officers was involved in an “all-out” physical confrontation, over 40,000 California peace officers were attacked and assaulted between 2000 and 2004. Physical fitness and proficiency in arrest, control, and search techniques should be a priority for all uniform and plainclothes peace officers. Additionally, plainclothes officers should be reminded of the importance of carrying their use of force options during duty hours.

Will to Win

The “Will to Win” is synonymous with the “Will to Survive.” This “Will to Survive or Win” is defined as a human response to do whatever it takes to survive a deadly situation. It can include trained responses or conditioned reactions, such as drawing and firing a service weapon, or the use of “fighting” skills.

Use of Force

During the review of the 23 victim peace officers’ responses to their attackers, it was reported that 13 of the 23 victim peace officers, or 57%, employed force. Although the uses of force were different in the 22 incidents, it is recommended that agencies continue to offer training courses dealing with verbal and physical tactics and non-lethal, less than lethal, and lethal force options. This should include establishment of appropriate firearms qualification standards for in-service personnel.

As to lethal force, 9 of the 23 victim peace officers, or 39%, were able to draw and fire their weapons during the fatal confrontations. Today, more California peace officers are being confronted by suspects who are armed either with firearms, knife/cutting instruments, or other dangerous weapons. This includes suspects using their fists, feet, and hands to attack and injure peace officers. Additional information is available in Chapter 3, 2000–2004 Peace Officer Assault Statistics, that provides data on assault types, assaults by firearms, assaults by knife/cutting instruments, other dangerous weapons, assaults by hands, fists, or feet, incidents by year, and peace officer injuries.

1.6.5 Searching – Areas, Buildings, People, and Vehicles

Searching areas, buildings, people, and vehicles is one of the more dangerous tasks performed by California peace officers. Peace officers should exercise caution, maturity, and effective search techniques when conducting searches. A cover officer should be present whenever searching areas, buildings, people, or vehicles. Utilization of additional personnel could include requests for air support, canine, Special Weapons and Tactical personnel, or a supervisor.

Weapon Retention

Unfortunately, 1 victim peace officer in this report was overpowered during a residential domestic dispute and his baton was taken. The suspect then killed the victim peace officer with the officer’s baton. Although weapon retention was a factor in only 1 murder between 2000 and 2004 and 2 murders between 1995–1999, weapon retention training is extremely important during arrest, control, and search training. Additionally, between 1995 and 2004, 7 victim peace officers had their firearms taken from them post-mortem. Thus, responding peace officers should be reminded that suspects might possess additional firearms and ammunition that were stolen from fellow law enforcement officers.

1.6.6 Overview of Tactical Considerations

The following peace officer attack trends and tactical concerns were recognized upon review of the 23 peace officer murders. The victim peace officers were performing traditional duties when the suspects unexpectedly attacked. Unfortunately, the victim peace officers were not prepared for these vicious and violent attacks.

- Backup and partner peace officers were working independently
- Backup and partner peace officers were not operating with effective tactical plans
- Victim peace officers approached incidents without requesting, waiting for, or utilizing assistance
- The victim peace officers failed to utilize verbal tactics in directing people to positions of disadvantage

The following issues are worthy of additional research and supplementary training:

- Why did the victim peace officer leave cover?
- Why did the victim peace officer act before assistance was available?
- Why was the victim peace officer unable to use a tactical plan?
- Why was the victim peace officer unable to approach the situation with more caution?
- Why was the victim officer unable to call for assistance?
- Why was the victim peace officer unable to move to cover?

1.6.7 Final Comments

“Peace officers are expected to be picture perfect in an imperfect world.”

This quote from a recognized student of California peace officer murders appropriately describes the demands, difficulties, and dangers of law enforcement duties in the 21st century. Hopefully, the commitment and passion demonstrated by those who supplied information, those who investigated and analyzed these fatal assaults and sad accidents, and those who studied the cases and authored this report will contribute to reducing California peace officer accidents, assaults, and murders.

Chapter 2

Officer Safety Guidelines

2000–2004 Statistics

POST and the LEOKA Committee are committed to the research of California peace officer accidental deaths, assaults, and murders. POST and the LEOKA Committee are committed to maintaining contemporary safety guidelines. POST is committed to developing and producing timely officer safety training via the California POST Television Network. POST is committed to publishing Critical Incidents Reports that will provide an overview of the incident. The 2000–2004 LEOKA Report Officer Safety Guidelines have been compiled from the information and analysis presented in Chapter 1, Incident Information. These guidelines contain policy and training recommendations for California peace officers.

List of Officer Guidelines

General Guidelines	
Guideline Number	Safety Recommendations
1	Master the basics
2	Be aware of the hands
3	Recognize and use cover
4	Utilize safe distances and positions of advantage
5	Use communication systems
6	Remember that suspects have access to and possess firearms
7	Understand that gang members are violent
8	Know the capabilities of your adversary's weapon
Patrol Guidelines	
9	Approach stopped vehicles with due caution
10	Remember arrest situations are dangerous
11	Recognize your limitations in foot pursuits
12	Control everyone involved in domestic violence and family disturbance incidents
13	Communicate with responding units and wait for backup
14	Carry a flashlight

List of Officer Guidelines
(cont)

High-Risk Calls and Special Operations Guidelines	
Guideline Number	Safety Recommendations
15	Realize the tactical difference between an active shooter and a barricaded suspect
16	Recognize the dangers when entering and searching buildings
17	Remember that vehicle pursuits are inherently dangerous
18	Coordinate tactical operations among law enforcement agencies
Ambush and Off-Duty Guidelines	
19	Maintain a will to win and a will to survive
20	Consider the tactical disadvantages and lack of equipment when off-duty

Section 2.1

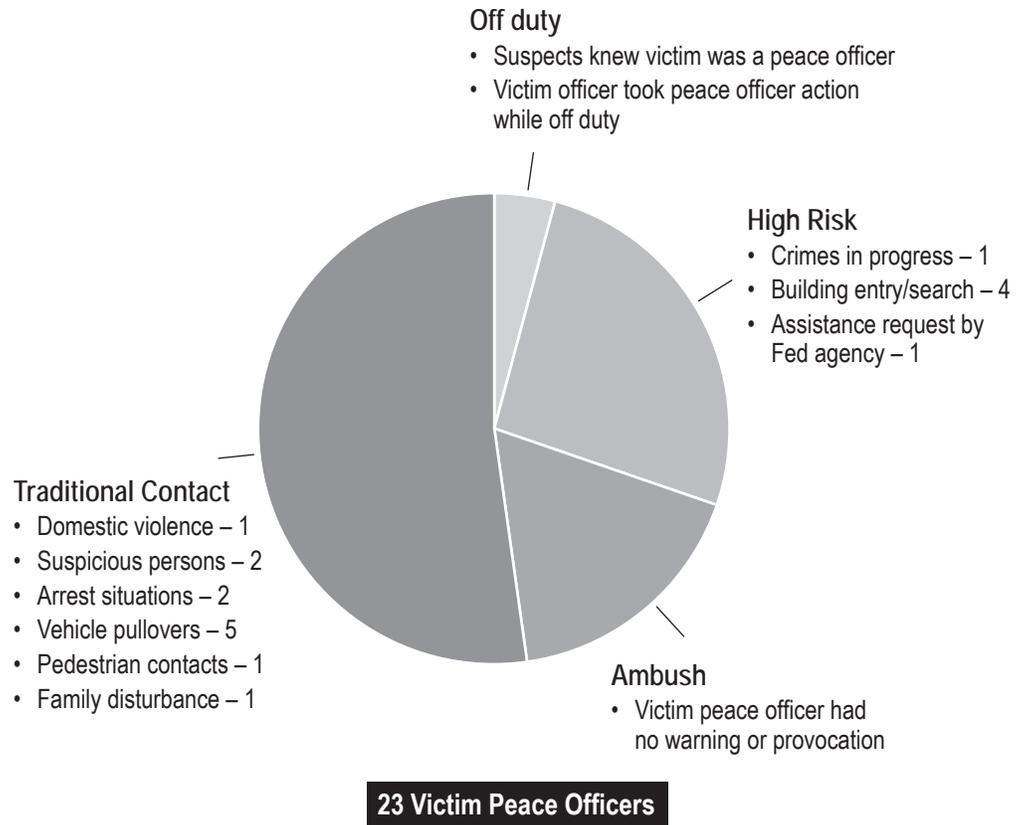
General Guidelines

The Officer Safety guidelines are universal and transcend all law enforcement activities. Supported by more than 25 years of LEOKA research and reports, these findings have shown that certain training issues remain critical. Unfortunately, specific causal factors are still resulting in peace officer attacks and murders.

The Victim Peace Officer Activity Chart on the next page shows that the 23 victim peace officers were involved in four specific activities when their murders occurred. The research of these activities formed the basis of the 2000-2004 LEOKA Report Safety Guidelines’ findings and recommendations.

Finding: Today one of the most dangerous issues facing peace officers is the peace officer’s work attitude that develops with daily tasks. Twenty-two of the 23 victim peace officers, or 96%, were murdered on-duty during traditional initiated activities, service calls, and vehicle stops.

**Types of VPO
Activities Examined**



**Guideline No. 1
Master the Basics**

Recommendation: The key to winning sudden and deadly attacks is to approach every contact, no matter how repetitious, with a proactive officer safety mind and winning attitude. The basics include

- Maintain awareness of cover and concealment
- Use clear and accurate radio communications
- Identify officer escape routes
- Recognize and respond to danger signs
- Request backup, wait for backup, and utilize backup as a team
- Work together as a team when additional assistance is present

Chapter 2: Officer Safety Guidelines

Guideline No. 2

Be Aware of the Hands

Finding: In the majority of the 2000–2004 California peace officer murders, including an off-duty death, the victim peace officers were murdered with firearms.

Recommendation: Awareness and control of suspects’ hands continues to be an absolute priority.

Guideline No. 3

Recognize and Use Cover

Finding: In this study, as well as in past studies, cover was available. Unfortunately, it was either abandoned or not utilized by the victim peace officers. This occurred in 4 of the 22 incidents, or 18%.

Recommendation: Identify and be aware of cover. Use, be ready to use, or move to cover when the situation dictates. During every situation, the use of available cover continues to be a basic tactical consideration and should be reinforced through position and movement training.

Guideline No. 4

Utilize Safe Distances and Positions of Advantage

Finding: Positioning was a primary factor in the death of 8 of the 23 peace officers killed, or 35%. Distance and positioning factors include:

- Abandoning a safe location
- Calling for assistance, yet making contact before back-up arrives
- Having a poor view of suspect(s)
- Stopping the patrol vehicle too close to the suspect
- Taking a position too close to the suspect

Recommendation: Be aware of the dangers that occur with poor positioning:

- Identify, plan, then move to positions that are advantageous when making law enforcement contacts
- Do not rush into a potentially dangerous area
- Wait for assistance

Guideline No. 5

Use Communication Systems

Finding: In 2 fatal incidents, radio communications were an issue. Radio communication is a critical safety practice issue that each peace officer should deal with on a daily basis.

Recommendation: Peace officers should understand the limitations of the law enforcement agency’s communication system. It is imperative that peace officers transmit appropriate, accurate, and timely safety and tactical

Guideline No. 6**Remember that Suspects Have Access to and Possess Firearms**

information. Regardless of an assignment, dispatch should be notified of all contacts and stops, including the nature and location of the contact. Currently, this is a challenge for many law enforcement agencies, especially those departments who deploy motorcycle officers and experience significant radio traffic.

Finding: During this study, 21 peace officers were killed with firearms. Six of the 21 victim peace officers, or 28%, were killed with high-powered rifles and assault type firearms.

Recommendation: Be aware that suspects may be armed or have access to a firearm. The key is finding a balance between taking action without jeopardizing safety, and losing effectiveness by being too cautious. Peace officers can still perform tasks effectively and efficiently without compromising officer safety.

Guideline No. 7**Understand that Gang Members Are Violent**

Finding: Thirteen of the 25 suspects, or 52%, were found to have a gang affiliation.

Recommendation: When dealing with gang members and their male and female associates, basic control tactics and sound tactical principles should be practiced. Gang members can present significant dangers to a community's welfare and to a peace officer's safety. In fact, this group may be the most dangerous field contact for law enforcement.

Guideline No. 8**Know the Capabilities of Your Adversary's Weapons**

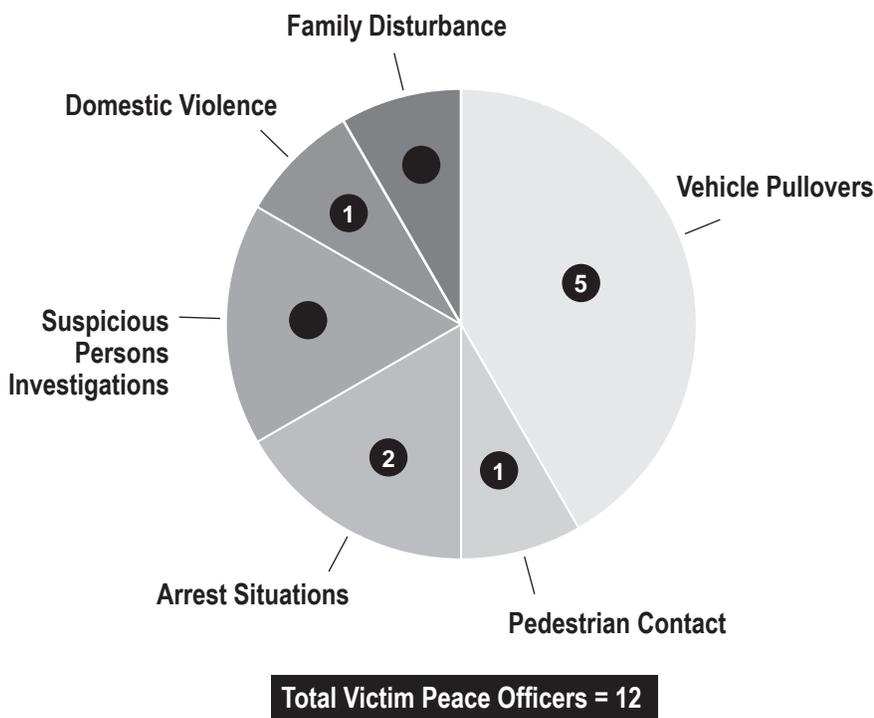
Finding: Five victim peace officers were killed with assault rifles, receiving a total of 23 wounds.

Recommendation: Know the capabilities of high-powered assault rifles. Assess the situation to determine the appropriate response and resources needed (i.e., SWAT resources, police rifle deployment, or the use of armored vehicles).

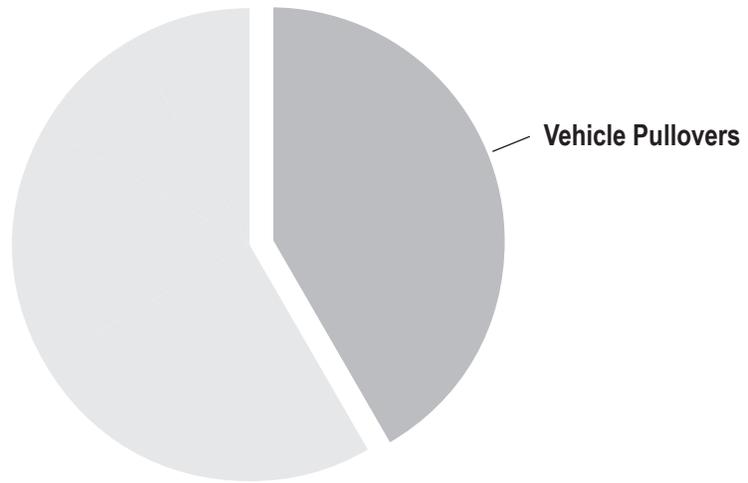
Section 2.2 Patrol Guidelines

Police patrol involves directed and self-initiated activities that include the everyday contacts that California peace officers make. Although sometimes considered routine contacts by the complacent peace officer, these “traditional contacts” cost the lives of 12 of the 23 peace officers killed, or 52%, in the 2000–2004 LEOKA Report. The following chart identifies the 6 contacts examined:

Physical Tactics



Vehicle Pullovers



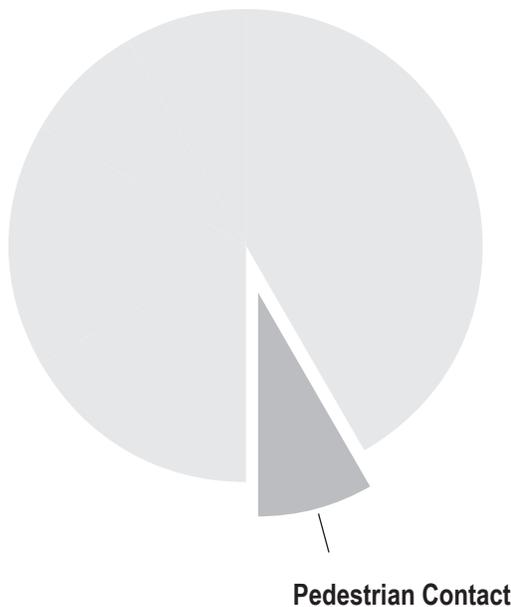
Total Victim Peace Officers = 12

Guideline No. 9
Approach Stopped Vehicles with Due Caution

Finding: Five California peace officers were fatally assaulted in vehicle pullovers during this report. In 1 of the 5 vehicle stops, the victim peace officer was shot while approaching the vehicle; and during 2 other vehicle stops, 2 officers were shot while approaching on the driver’s side. Another victim peace officer was shot during a pat-down outside the suspect’s vehicle, and 1 victim peace officer was shot during a foot pursuit after trying to pat-down the suspect outside the suspect’s vehicle.

Recommendation: Peace officers should continuously maintain observation and control of all vehicle occupants. They should consider the circumstances of the stop and evaluate the option of whether to approach the vehicle or direct the occupants from the vehicle to a safer position for the contact. In many situations, varying the approach with movement down the driver or passenger side of the vehicle can be advantageous for officer safety.

Pedestrian Contact



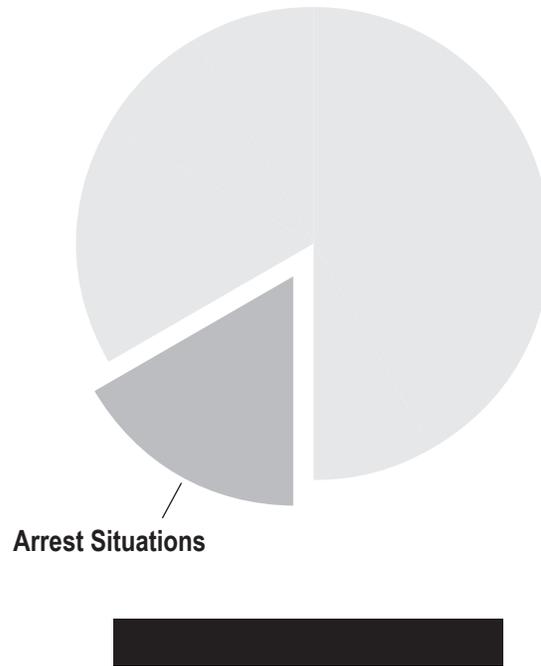
Total Victim Peace Officers = 12

Guideline No. 10
Consider Cover, Distance, and Force Options

Finding: While 2 plainclothes officers were conducting a pedestrian contact in a high-crime area, the 2 suspects separated and walked away. The officers then decided to stop 1 suspect. However, he ignored their commands and removed an assault rifle from a large and puffy jacket. The suspect quickly turned and shot both officers, wounding 1 and killing the other.

Recommendation: When stopping pedestrians, officers must always assess their position and cover prior to verbal and physical contact. Officers must be mentally prepared to immediately utilize legal and proper force options to protect community members, fellow officers, and themselves.

Arrest Situations



Guideline No. 11

Remember Arrest Situations Are Dangerous

Finding: Two peace officers were killed while attempting to arrest suspects. One victim peace officer was shot outside of a house by a suspect's family member during an arrest. Another victim peace officer was shot inside the suspect's residence while cover officers were present

Recommendation: Regardless of the violation, peace officers should have assistance and a tactical plan once a decision is made to make an arrest. Weapon retention training remains an ongoing priority for peace officers.

Suspicious Persons and Investigations



Guideline No. 12

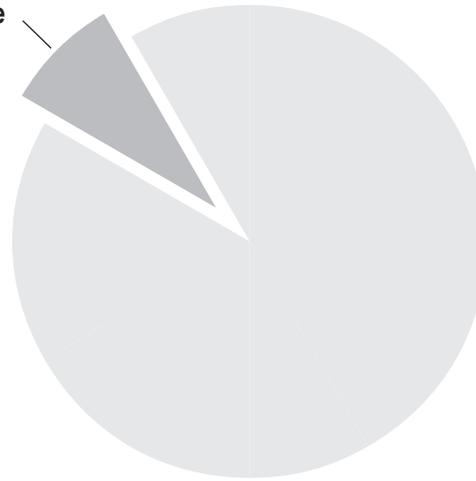
Recognize Your Limitations in Foot Pursuits

Finding: Two peace officers were killed during foot pursuits in this study. One victim officer was investigating a suspicious person, and another victim officer was chasing a suspect after a vehicle pullover.

Recommendation: Before initiating a foot pursuit, peace officers should recognize the dangers and consider the totality of the circumstances. If possible, establishing a perimeter with containment, directing backup, air support, or canine resources and waiting for assistance before searching and apprehending a suspect has proven to be safer and more effective.

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence



Total Victim Peace Officers = 12

Guideline No. 13

Control Everyone Involved in Domestic Violence

Finding: Two victim peace officers were killed in situations involving domestic violence/disturbance incidents.

Recommendation: Peace officers should recognize the ever-increasing dangers when handling domestic violence and disturbance incidents. Consistent practice will reinforce basic tactics. Peace officers should safely respond, approach, and handle these calls as they would any crime-in-progress incident.

Guideline No. 14

Carry a Flashlight

Finding: Not using a flashlight was a significant factor in 3 of the 23 incidents, or 13%, where peace officers were killed.

Recommendation: Regardless of assignment and shift hours, all peace officers should have a flashlight immediately available. Due to the reduced flashlight sizes and weight, plain-clothes personnel, especially those working detective, investigative, and specialized assignments, should also have a flashlight immediately available. Additionally, peace officers should recognize that certain activities require that flashlights be readily accessible on an equipment belt or in a pocket.

*Section 2.3: High Risk Calls/Special Operations Guidelines***Section 2.3****High Risk Calls/Special Operations Guidelines**

This section identifies the considerations involved when responding to known, potentially dangerous calls requiring special knowledge, and/or tactical operations.

2.3.1**Crimes-in-Progress Guidelines**

These guidelines focus on communications, tactics, teamwork, and mental preparation involving crisis rehearsal and visualization exercises.

Guideline No. 15**Realize the Tactical Difference between an Active Shooter and Barricaded Suspect**

Finding: One peace officer was killed when using active shooter tactics during a barricaded suspect incident.

Recommendation: Peace officers should make a thorough evaluation of the incident prior to initiating a tactical response.

2.3.2**Building Entry/Search Guidelines**

Guideline No. 16**Recognize the Dangers when Entering and Searching a Building**

Finding: Three peace officers were fatally assaulted during high-risk building entry and search operations.

Recommendation: High-risk building entries and searches require leadership, tactical planning, and teamwork. Consideration should be given to whether an entry is necessary and if the available resources can effectively and safely initiate and support the entry and search operation. The “Surround and Call-Out” tactical concept is an appropriate response to many situations.

2.3.3

Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines

Guideline No. 17

**Remember that
Vehicle Pursuits Are
Inherently Dangerous**

Finding: One peace officer was killed while pursuing a stolen vehicle.

Recommendation: When involved in vehicle pursuits, peace officers should constantly assess their positions, especially when they leave their police unit. Additionally, resources such as police helicopters, spike strips, and supervisors should be used when possible. As soon as tactically feasible, motorcycle officers should relinquish a vehicle pursuit to a marked patrol car. See [Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines](#). (PDF, 4.3 MB)

2.3.4

Interagency-Operational Guidelines

This guideline focuses on working safely with other law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal levels.

Guideline No. 18

**Coordinate Tactical
Operations Among Law
Enforcement Agencies**

Finding: One peace officer was murdered after responding to an assistance request from another law enforcement agency where shots were being fired during a warrant service.

Recommendation: Absent a spontaneous incident, tactical guidelines should be established before pre-planned interagency operations are initiated. These guidelines should be included in a tactical plan that addresses various contingencies and responsibilities, including emergency situations such as medical evacuations, rescuing people, and specialized responses — air support, canine, SWAT, etc. Additionally, in the interest of public safety, local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies should make notification to the local and responsible agency when conducting pre-planned high-risk operations. These notifications should be timely and thorough without jeopardizing the investigation and tactical operation.

*Section 2.4: Ambush and Off-Duty Incident Guidelines***Section 2.4****Ambush and Off-Duty Incident Guidelines**

This section provides guidelines for ambush and off-duty situations.

2.4.1**Ambush Guidelines**

Unexpected attacks on peace officers by ambush have increased in the last few years.

Guideline No. 19**Maintain a Will to Win/Survive**

Finding: There were 4 peace officers killed in ambush attacks. Two of the 4 victim peace officers were conducting traditional non-enforcement activities involving a homicide follow-up investigation and providing assistance at a domestic violence arrest.

Recommendation: Regardless of the situation, the key to winning deadly attacks is the peace officer's reaction skills and the will to survive. The will to survive must always be paramount. Additionally, knowing your surroundings, recognizing a location's potential for danger, and if ambushed, exiting the threat zone to a defensible position are primary tactical measures.

2.4.2**Off-Duty Police Actions**

These guidelines focus on tactical limitations, personal judgment, and the carrying of an off-duty firearm. Peace officers should weigh the potential for injury or death to family, friends, and others when facing an off-duty threat. Peace officers should discuss off-duty involvement with their loved ones.

Guideline No. 20**Consider the Equipment/Tactical Disadvantages when Off-Duty**

Finding: One peace officer was murdered in an off-duty incident. The peace officer took action when he became the victim of an assault rifle attack and robbery. He was armed with his department issued firearm, and had his police identification and a cellular telephone with him.

Chapter 2: Officer Safety Guidelines

Recommendation: Legal, proper, and personal judgments are critical to the successful and safe outcome of an off-duty law enforcement incident. Unless there is no other option, the best plan may be the following:

- Notify the appropriate law enforcement agency
- Consider the limitations of the tactical situation
- Decide to cooperate with the criminal, becoming an effective witness
- Remember, surrendering personal property is an honorable decision when it ensures the safety of family, friends, others, and yourself

Chapter 3

**Peace Officer Assaults
2000–2004 Statistics**

This chapter provides tabulated assault data from the California Department of Justice’s Criminal Justice Statistics Center. It also contains information on methods used to gather accurate assault data and reported recommendations, and a list of the identified limitations with the assault data that has been gathered.

Section 3.1**California Department of Justice Program**

The following information was prepared by the California Department of Justice.

3.1.1**Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC)**

The California Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center (DOJ/CJSC), has the record keeping responsibility for reporting California duty-related deaths and other peace officer assault statistics to the [Uniform Crime Reporting \(UCR\) Program](#) in Washington, D.C. This data is collected on Form 1-705, “Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted” (LEOKA). On a monthly basis, participating California law enforcement agencies submit the completed LEOKA forms to the DOJ/CJSC. The results are then tabulated and sent to UCR in Washington, D.C., in compliance with California Penal Code Section 13010.

3.1.2

California LEOKA Program

The California LEOKA Program has been automated since 1990. This program has the following objectives:

LEOKA Objectives

1	Maintain a statewide database, containing the number of officers killed and assaulted with the circumstances surrounding the assault
2	Ensure the reporting requirements of California Penal Code Section 13010 are met
3	Provide data on peace officers killed for the DOJ/CJSC’s annual publication, “Homicide in California”
4	Provide data for the annual FBI publication, “Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted”
5	Prepare special reports, including information for POST’s LEOKA Reports

LEOKA Forms

The LEOKA forms are submitted to the DOJ/CJSC monthly by participating local law enforcement agencies, as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The forms include the following information:

- Type of activity
- Type of weapon
- Type of assignment
- Police assaults cleared
- With personal injury/without personal injury
- Time of assault
- Peace officers murdered by felonious act, accident, or negligence
- Officers killed by accident or negligence

**LEOKA Statistical
Limitations**

The following limitations should be considered when analyzing, interpreting, and using LEOKA data:

- Program participants do not always complete the form in a consistent manner. There are several potential places on the form to document officer assaults. One assault may be counted more than once depending on how the form is completed.
- When more than one type of weapon is used to commit a single assault, the form is formatted to document only one weapon.
- There is inconsistency in the reporting process of peace officer assaults. Some agencies may report any situation where an officer is “slightly” assaulted (e.g., shoved or pushed). Other agencies will not document assaults unless the victim peace officer is seriously hurt (hospitalized).
- Officers murdered are not included in the tabulated LEOKA assault data. The summary number of reported deaths is captured in another field with no incident specifics.
- The data included on the LEOKA form is complete to the extent that the participating law enforcement agencies fulfilled their individual reporting obligations.
- The data is accurate and reliable to the extent that the statistics are machine edited for validity and consistency of logic.
- The LEOKA assault data is provided to the California Department of Justice on a voluntary basis.

Section 3.2 California Peace Officer Assault Data

Assault data in this section is displayed by year, type of weapon, and type of activity.

3.2.1 Reported Assaults on California Peace Officers

Between 1995 and 1999, an average of 6,849 California peace officer assaults occurred per year. However, during 2000–2004, it was reported that 40,080 California peace officers were assaulted. This represents an average annual increase of 1,167 more attacks on peace officers in comparison to the previous 5 years.

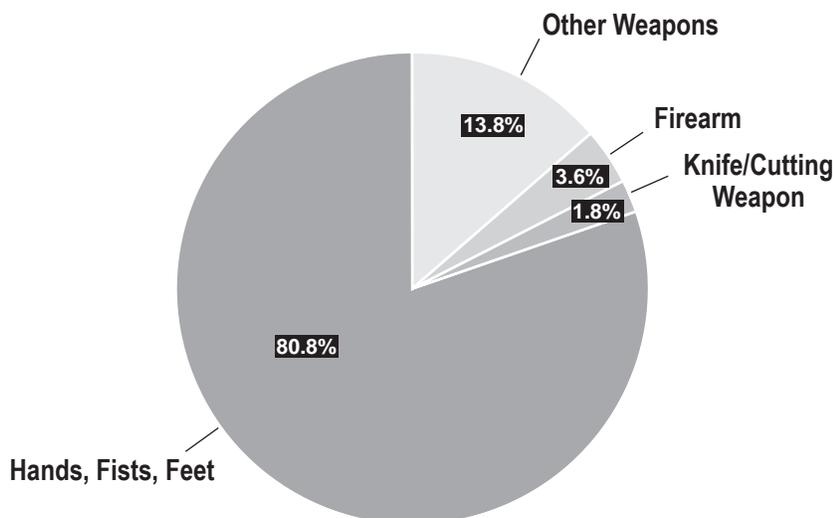
California Peace Officer Assaults 2000–2004

Year	Number of Assaults
2000	7,921
2001	7,748
2002	7,768
2003	8,220
2004	8,423
Total	40,080

3.2.1 Assault Types

The following chart shows the percentage of assaults by the type of weapon used to assault the victim peace officers. Over 80% of the assaults were committed with hands, fists, or feet.

Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted by Type of Weapon



3.2.3 Analysis by Type of Weapon

The following series of tables and graphs represents the 4 weapon assault types reported to the DOJ/CJSC. Each of the 4 types shows significant statistics by type of incident and assaults per year.

Peace Officer Assaults with a Firearm

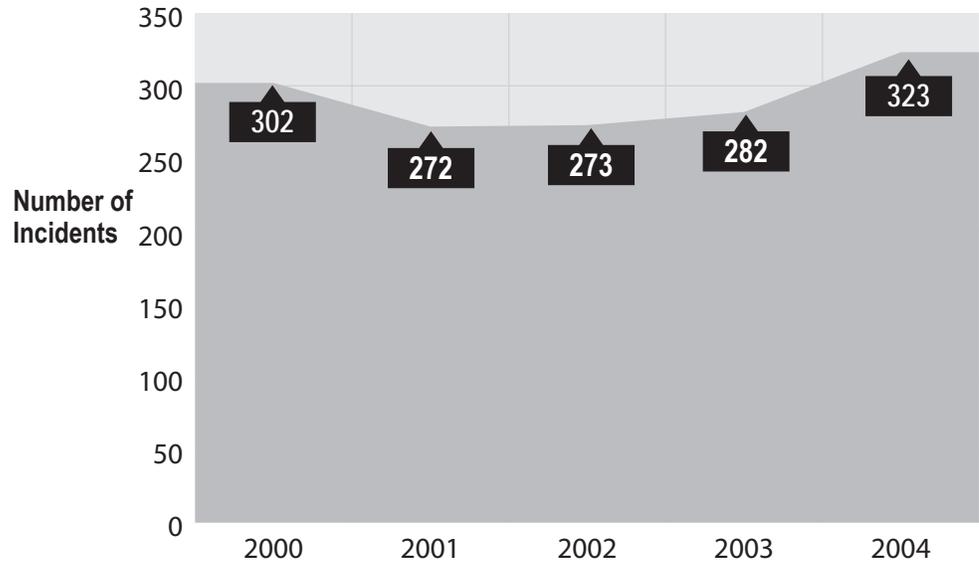
Disturbance calls and traffic stops/pursuits accounted for 49% of all firearm assaults, 29% and 20% respectively.

Reported Assaults by Firearm												
Incident Type	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
Disturbance calls	103	34.1	73	26.8	59	21.6	78	27.7	97	30.0	410	28.2
Burglaries	10	3.3	6	2.2	1	0.4	6	2.1	9	2.8	32	2.2
Robberies	11	3.6	19	7.0	23	8.4	8	2.8	8	2.5	69	4.8
Other arrests	14	4.6	35	12.9	30	11.0	18	6.4	21	6.5	118	8.1
Civil disorders	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
Handling prisoners	1	0.3	3	1.1	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.6	8	0.6
Suspicious persons/ circumstances	32	10.6	48	17.6	39	14.3	34	12.1	54	16.7	207	14.3
Ambush	31	10.3	12	4.4	0	0.0	9	3.2	2	0.6	54	3.7
Mentally ill	7	2.3	5	1.8	0	0.0	1	0.4	5	1.5	18	1.2
Traffic stops/pursuits	59	19.5	41	15.1	74	27.1	65	23.0	60	18.6	299	20.6
All other	33	10.9	30	11.0	45	16.5	63	22.3	65	20.1	236	16.3
Total	302	100.0	272	100.0	273	100.0	282	100.0	323	100.0	1,452	100.0

Number of incidents
 Percent of incidents

Section 3.2: California Peace Officer Assault Data

**TRENDS:
Peace Officer Assaults
with a Firearm**



**Assaults by
Knife/Cutting Weapons**

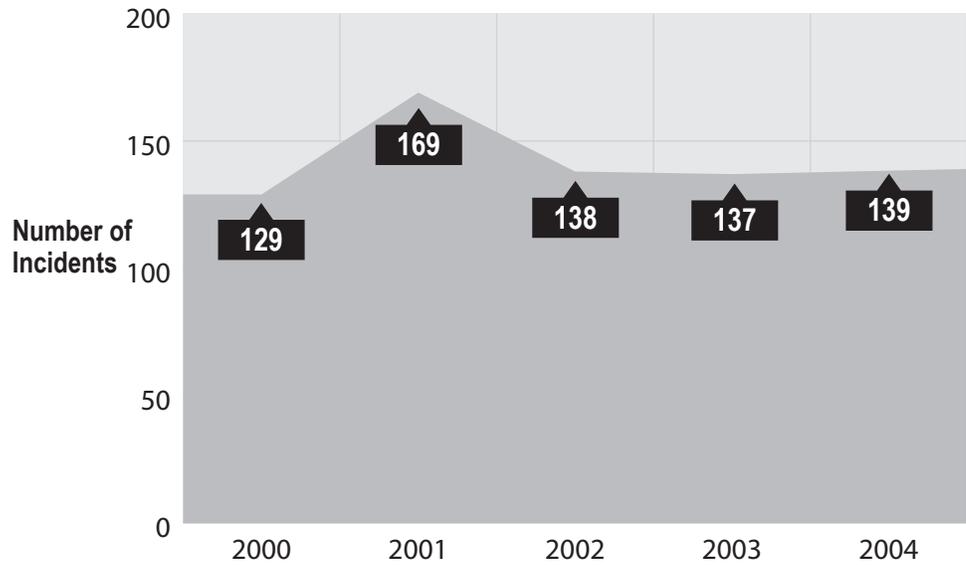
Disturbance calls and suspicious persons/circumstances accounted for 63% of all knife/cutting instrument assaults, 47% and 16% respectively.

Reported Assaults by Knife/Cutting Weapons												
Incident Type	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
Disturbance calls	64	49.6	97	57.4	62	44.9	58	42.3	56	40.3	337	47.3
Burglaries	4	3.1	2	1.2	1	0.7	5	3.6	2	1.4	14	2.0
Robberies	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.7	3	0.4
Other arrests	7	5.4	4	2.4	7	5.1	9	6.6	5	3.6	32	4.5
Civil disorders	4	3.1	1	0.6	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	0.8
Handling prisoners	5	3.9	14	8.3	9	6.5	3	2.2	2	1.4	33	4.6
Suspicious persons/ circumstances	20	15.5	27	16.0	19	13.8	21	15.3	28	20.1	115	16.2
Ambush	3	2.3	0	0.0	2	1.4	1	0.7	0	0.0	6	0.8
Mentally ill	5	3.9	7	4.1	14	10.1	10	7.3	8	5.8	44	6.2
Traffic stops/ pursuits	3	2.3	7	4.1	5	3.6	14	10.2	15	10.8	44	6.2
All other	13	10.1	10	5.9	18	13.0	15	10.9	22	15.8	78	11.0
Total	129	100.0	169	100.0	138	100.0	137	100.0	139	100.0	712	100.0

Number of incidents Percent of incidents

Chapter 3: Peace Officer Assaults

**TRENDS:
Assaults by
Knife/Cutting Weapon**



**Assaults by
Other Dangerous
Weapons**

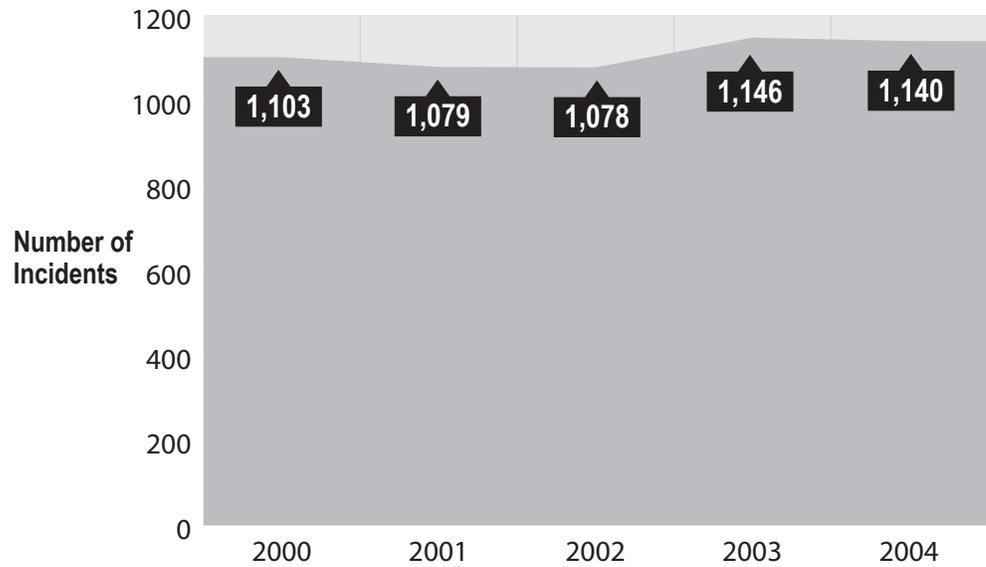
Disturbance calls and traffic stops/pursuits accounted for 47% of all “other dangerous weapon” assaults, 23% and 24% respectively.

Reported Assaults by Other Dangerous Weapons												
Incident Type	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
Disturbance calls	269	24.4	246	22.8	215	20.0	255	22.3	271	23.8	1,256	22.7
Burglaries	21	1.9	21	1.9	23	2.1	19	1.7	46	4.0	130	2.3
Robberies	18	1.6	6	0.6	4	.4	19	1.7	9	.8	56	1.0
Other arrests	81	7.3	75	7.0	96	8.9	81	7.1	96	8.4	429	7.7
Civil disorders	164	14.9	33	3.1	18	1.7	44	3.8	8	0.7	267	4.8
Handling prisoners	82	7.4	96	8.9	101	9.4	100	8.7	83	7.3	462	8.3
Suspicious persons/ circumstances	100	9.1	118	10.9	120	11.2	142	12.4	170	14.9	650	11.7
Ambush	11	1.0	6	0.6	8	0.7	3	0.3	7	0.6	35	0.6
Mentally ill	30	2.7	34	3.2	26	2.4	10	0.9	15	1.3	115	2.1
Traffic stops/pursuits	205	18.6	282	26.1	287	26.7	289	25.2	278	24.4	1,341	24.2
All other	122	11.1	162	15.0	178	16.5	184	16.1	157	13.8	803	14.5
Total	1,103	100.0	1,079	100.0	1,076	100.0	1,146	100.0	1,140	100.0	5,544	100.0

Number of incidents Percent of incidents

Section 3.2: California Peace Officer Assault Data

TRENDS:
Assaults by
Other Dangerous
Weapons



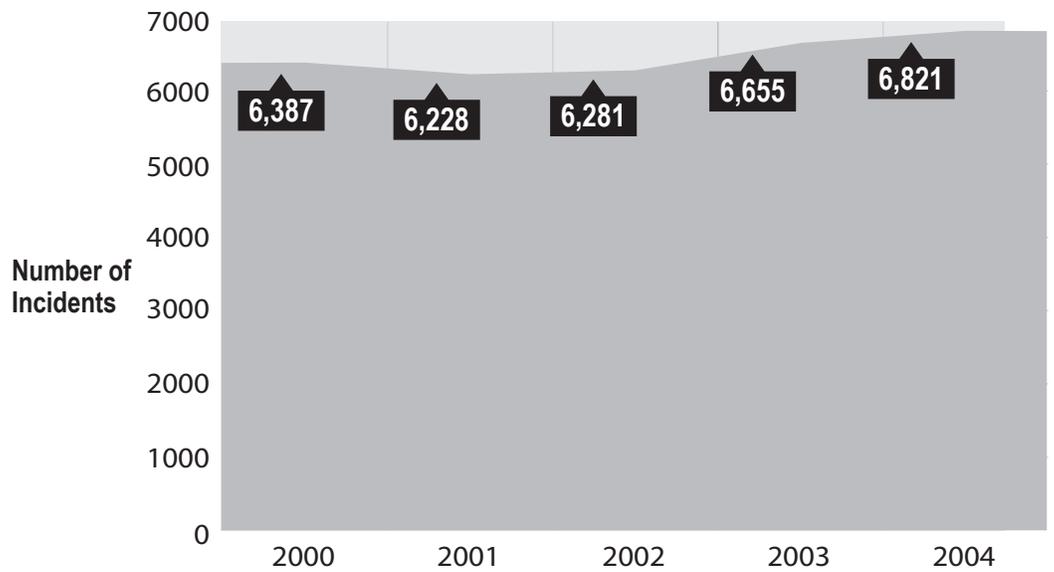
**Assaults by
Hands, Fists, or Feet**

Disturbance calls and handling prisoners accounted for 50% of all hands, fists, or feet assaults, 33% and 17% respectively.

More than 80% of assaults involved hands, fists, or feet. Arrestees and prisoners used their hands, fists, or feet more often than any other weapon. This is not surprising, since other weapons may have already been removed during search. Often, hands, fists, or feet may be the only weapon available.

Reported Assaults by Hands, Fists, or Feet												
Incident Type	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
Disturbance calls	2,204	34.5	2,139	34.3	2,071	33.0	2,126	31.9	2,067	30.3	10,607	32.8
Burglaries	111	1.7	72	1.2	96	1.5	84	1.3	80	1.2	443	1.4
Robberies	57	0.9	54	0.9	41	0.7	53	0.8	47	0.7	252	0.8
Other arrests	569	8.9	561	9.0	569	9.1	647	9.7	757	11.1	3,103	9.6
Civil disorders	97	1.5	56	0.9	70	1.1	98	1.5	81	1.2	402	1.2
Handling prisoners	955	15.0	1,058	17.0	1,102	17.5	1,204	18.1	1,376	20.2	5,695	17.6
Suspicious persons/ circumstances	938	14.7	786	12.6	791	12.6	838	12.6	840	12.3	4,193	13.0
Ambush	17	0.3	14	0.2	13	0.2	7	0.1	11	0.2	62	0.2
Mentally ill	110	1.7	133	2.1	110	1.8	147	2.2	171	2.5	671	2.1
Traffic stops/pursuits	667	10.4	603	9.7	490	7.8	551	8.3	521	7.6	2,832	8.7
All other	662	10.4	752	12.1	928	14.8	900	13.5	870	12.8	4,112	12.7
Total	6,387	100.0	6,228	100.0	6,281	100.0	6,655	100.0	6,821	100.0	32,372	100.0

**TRENDS:
Assaults by
Hands, Fists, Feet**



3.2.4 Analysis by Time of Incident

The following table represents the number of peace officer assaults by time of assault and year. Of the total number of assaults, 61% occurred between the hours of 4:00 pm and 2:00 am. The time frame that consistently had the most assaults over the 5-year period was 10:00 pm to 12:00 am.

Section 3.2: California Peace Officer Assault Data

Assaults by Time of Assault

Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted By Time of Assault												
Time of Assault	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
0001 - 0200	936	11.8	909	11.7	866	11.1	923	11.2	981	11.6	4,615	11.5
0201 - 0400	590	7.4	571	7.4	445	5.7	511	6.2	561	6.7	2,678	6.7
0401 - 0600	243	3.1	254	3.3	240	3.1	246	3.0	249	3.0	1,232	3.1
0601 - 0800	256	3.2	215	2.8	246	3.2	250	3.0	243	2.9	1,210	3.0
0801 - 1000	393	5.0	348	4.5	372	4.8	412	5.0	461	5.5	1,986	5.0
1001 - 1200	436	5.5	433	5.6	405	5.2	497	6.0	524	6.2	2,295	5.7
1201 - 1400	497	6.3	516	6.7	600	7.7	574	7.0	585	6.9	2,772	6.9
1401 - 1600	571	7.2	676	8.7	617	7.9	684	8.3	771	9.2	3,319	8.3
1601 - 1800	809	10.2	762	9.8	783	10.1	875	10.6	826	9.8	4,055	10.1
1801 - 2000	941	11.9	895	11.6	946	12.2	1,082	13.2	995	11.8	4,859	12.1
2001 - 2200	1,102	13.9	1,042	13.4	1,104	14.2	1,037	12.6	1,092	13.0	5,377	13.4
2201 - 2400	1,147	14.5	1,127	14.5	1,244	14.7	1,129	13.7	1,135	13.5	5,682	14.2
Total	7,921	100.0	7,748	100.0	7,768	100.0	8,220	100.0	8,423	100.0	40,080	100.0

Number of incidents
 Percent of incidents

3.2.5 Analysis by Type of Weapon and Injury

The following table represents the number of peace officer assaults by type of weapon, injury, and year. Of the total number of assaults, law enforcement officers were injured 29% of the time. The number of assaults with injury increased 33% from 1,970 assaults in 2000 to 2,621 assaults in 2004. Assaults with injury as a percentage of the total also increased from 25% to 32%. Assaults by hands, fists, or feet had the largest change in percentage of assaults with injuries, rising from 21% in 2000 to 27% of the total in 2004.

Chapter 3: Peace Officer Assaults

**Assaults by
Type of Weapon
and Injury**

Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted By Type of Weapon and Injury												
Type of Weapon/Injury	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
Firearm	302	3.8	272	3.5	273	3.5	282	3.4	323	3.8	1,452	3.6
With injury	27	0.3	15	0.2	16	0.2	16	0.2	12	0.1	86	0.2
Without injury	275	3.5	257	3.3	257	3.3	266	3.2	311	3.7	1,366	3.4
Knife/cutting instrument	129	1.6	170	2.2	138	1.8	137	1.7	139	1.7	713	1.8
With injury	6	0.1	16	0.2	12	0.2	16	0.2	16	0.2	66	0.2
Without injury	123	1.6	154	2.0	126	1.6	121	1.5	123	1.5	647	1.6
Other dangerous weapon	1,103	13.9	1,079	13.9	1,076	13.9	1,146	13.9	1,140	13.5	5,544	13.8
With injury	245	3.1	241	3.1	253	3.3	275	3.3	287	3.4	1,301	3.2
Without injury	858	10.8	838	10.8	823	10.6	871	10.6	853	10.1	4,243	10.6
Hands, fists, feet	6,387	80.6	6,227	80.4	6,281	80.9	6,655	81.0	6,821	81.0	32,371	80.8
With injury	1,692	21.4	2,014	26.0	1,968	25.3	2,075	25.2	2,306	27.4	10,055	25.1
Without injury	4,695	59.3	4,213	54.4	4,313	55.5	4,580	55.7	4,515	53.6	22,316	55.7
Total	7,921	100.0	7,748	100.0	7,768	100.0	8,220	100.0	8,423	100.0	40,080	100.0

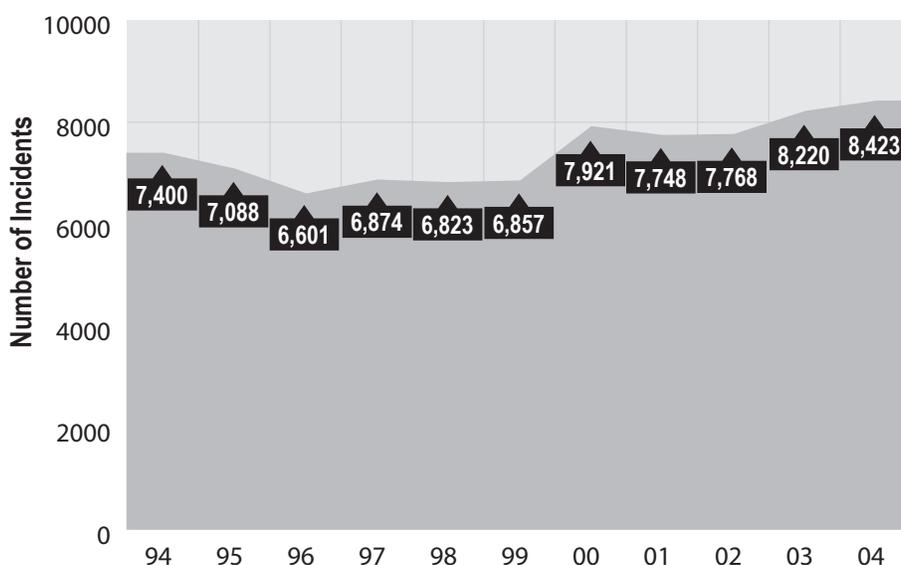
Number of incidents
 Percent of incidents

Section 3.3

Assault Data: Final Comments

The graph below represents the reported California peace officer assaults for the years 1994–2004. The total number of assaults increased 14% from 7,400 assaults in 1994 to 8,423 assaults in 2004. The rise in assaults, as well as the assaults which resulted in personal injury, reinforces the need for officers to be increasingly cautious of their personal safety.

TRENDS:
Law Enforcement
Officers Assaulted
1994–2004



3.3.1

Assault Data Recommendations

Adherence to the following recommendations will help both POST and the DOJ/CJSC provide California law enforcement with the best and most accurate information:

Recommendation No. 1

- Every California law enforcement agency should participate in the California LEOKA Assault Data Reporting Program.

Recommendation No. 2

- All California law enforcement agencies should assess their current procedures in reporting peace officer assault data, ensuring the accuracy and consistency of their reports.

3.3.2 California Law Enforcement Agency Participation

POST and the LEOKA Committee acknowledge and commend the California law enforcement agencies that have thoroughly completed and timely submitted accurate assault data. California law enforcement agencies that are not participating in this program are encouraged to contact:

[California Department of Justice](#)
[Criminal Justice Statistics Center](#)

P.O. Box 903427
Sacramento, CA 94203-4270
(916) 227-0540 or 227-3476

Chapter 4

Accidental Deaths

2000–2004 Statistics

Section 4.1

Incident Information

From 2000–2004, 60 California peace officers died in the line of duty. Thirty-seven of the 60 deaths or (67%) have been ruled accidental. This is a 17% increase over the previous 5-year study. This section will examine the incident variables in the 37 accidental deaths.

Accidental Deaths by Year 2000-2004

Year	Accidental Deaths	No. of Incidents
2000	8	7
2001	5	5
2002	4	4
2003	12	12
2004	8	8
Total	37	36

▲ *Conclusion:* During the past 10 years, 1995–2004, 70 of the 167 peace officers, or 42%, of California peace officers killed have lost their lives accidentally. Thus, the prevention of accidental deaths should be a priority for California law enforcement.

4.1.1

Accidental Deaths Defined

Accidental deaths are defined as unexpected and unintentional events, including vehicle and aircraft accidents, natural disasters, health-related conditions, or similar events caused by human error, mechanical failure, mistake, or misfortune that result in the death of an on-duty California peace officer.

4.1.2

Location and Conditions

The following map and tables represent the locations and conditions at the time of the accidental deaths.

Chapter 4: Accidental Deaths

**Accidental Deaths
by Region
2000–2004**

This map divides California into four regions to illustrate the distribution of peace officers murders. The regions are designated as follows:



Northern Region: 2 Deaths	
2000	0
2001	1
2002	0
2003	1
2004	0
Total	2

SF Bay Region: 6 Deaths	
2000	2
2001	1
2002	1
2003	0
2004	2
Total	6

Central Region: 6 Deaths	
2000	0
2001	1
2002	1
2003	2
2004	2
Total	6

Southern Region: 23 Deaths	
2000	6
2001	2
2002	2
2003	9
2004	4
Total	23

Note: Consistent with the peace officer murder trends for the past 5 years, 2000–2004, and the last 10 years, 1995–2004, the Southern Region experienced the most accidental deaths.

Section 4.1: Incident Information

Incidents by Time of Year

1995–2004

- 46 of 70 accidental deaths occurred in the Southern Region, or 66%.

2000–2004

- 23 of 37 accidental deaths occurred in the Southern Region, or 62%.

This table shows the seasonal distribution of the 37 accidental deaths. Two officers were killed in 1 incident during the winter season.

Season	Months	Victim Officers
Winter	Dec/Jan/Feb	10
Spring	Mar/Apr/May	6
Summer	Jun/Jul/Aug	11
Fall	Sep/Oct/Nov	10
Total		37

▲ *Conclusion:* The fall and winter seasons each accounted for 10 accidental deaths. Generally, these months of the year produce more adverse weather conditions for California drivers. Since some California peace officers do not frequently drive in adverse conditions, training reminders regarding safe vehicle operations should precede the fall and winter seasons.

Incidents by Day of Week

This table shows how many victim peace officers died accidentally by day of week and indicates the incident numbers.

Season	No. of Incidents	Victim Officers
Sunday	5	5
Monday	3	3
Tuesday	8	9
Wednesday	9	9
Thursday	6	6
Friday	2	2
Saturday	3	3
Total	36	37

Chapter 4: Accidental Deaths

**Incidents by
Time of Day**

This table lists the times of accidental deaths in 6-hour blocks of time.

24-Hour Time	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
00:01–06:00	3	1	0	2	0	6
06:01–12:00	2	1	1	3	1	8
12:01–18:00	1	1	2	5	5	14
18:01–24:00	2	2	1	2	2	9
Total	8	5	4	12	8	37

Note: Fourteen of the 37 accidental deaths, or 38%, occurred between 12:01 and 18:00. Generally, these are time periods where commercial and residential populations are involved in more pedestrian movement and vehicle traffic.

Section 4.2 Victim Peace Officer Profiles

This section presents profile information for the 37 peace officers accidentally killed in the line of duty during this study period. All of the victim officers were male.

This table shows a profile range of the victim peace officers by physical characteristics.

Characteristics	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Age	29 years	66 years	42 years
Law enforcement experience	1.6 years	29 years	16.6 years

▲ *Conclusion:* There were no predominant physical characteristics to report.

This table shows the breakdown of the victim peace officers by rank.

Rank	Victim Officers
Officer/deputy	31
Detective/investigator	2
Corporal	1
Sergeant	2
Reserve	1
Total	37

This table shows the breakdown of the victim peace officers by assignment.

Assignment	Victim Officers
Patrol/traffic	31
Investigator	2
Helicopter	2
Range	1
SWAT	1
Total	37

VPO:
Physical Profile

Rank

Assignment

Chapter 4: Accidental Deaths

Type of Agency

This table shows the breakdown of victim peace officers by type of agency.

Agency	Victim Officers
Municipal police department	18
Sheriff's department	10
CHP or statewide department	9
Total	37

Section 4.3

Types of Accidental Deaths

This section covers types of accidental deaths but primarily focuses on vehicle-related collisions.

Types of Accidents by Number 2000-2004

Type of Accident	Victim Officers
Patrol vehicle collisions	13
Motorcycle patrol collisions	11
Pedestrian officer struck by traffic	4
Accidental discharge	3
Aerial collisions	2
Friendly fire	2
Industrial	1
Training	1
Total	37

4.3.1

Traffic-Related Collisions

As shown in past studies, traffic-related collisions continue to be the most common cause of accidental peace officer deaths in California, accounting for 28 of the 37 accidental deaths reported, or 76%.

The most frequent traffic collisions were the result of loss of control and community member drivers being under the influence. Of the 28 related deaths, 4 of the peace officers, or 14%, were on foot or were engaged in traffic enforcement and investigation activities.

This table shows the 28 vehicle-related incidents resulting in the deaths of 28 officers.

Vehicle-Related Collisions

Type of Collision	Victim Officers
1. High speed:	
a. VPO was responding to an officer back-up call and traveling at a high speed while negotiating a curve. VPO lost control and struck a lamppost.	1
b. VPO was responding to an officer back-up call, lost control and struck a tree.	1
c. VPO was traveling at a high rate of speed while engaged in enforcement activity, ran off the road, and rolled vehicle.	1

Vehicle-Related Collisions
(cont)

Type of Collision	Victim Officers
d. VPO was traveling at a high rate of speed while engaged in enforcement activity, lost control on a curve, ran off the road and struck a tree.	1
e. VPO was responding Code Three to an officer back-up call, ran a red light in an intersection and struck another police vehicle which was responding Code Three to the same incident.	1
f. VPO was driving an unmarked sheriff's vehicle and was struck by a vehicle traveling at a high speed and being pursued by another law enforcement agency.	1
g. VPO was attempting to overtake a speeding vehicle and lost control.	1
h. VPO was responding Code Three when another driver pulled out in front of the VPO. VPO lost control and struck a tree.	1
i. VPO was responding to an officer back-up call and was traveling at a high speed. VPO's vehicle left the roadway and VPO was ejected.	1
2. Head-on:	
a. VPO was struck head-on by another vehicle passing in the opposite direction.	1
3. Pedestrian officer struck by traffic:	
a. Pedestrian VPO struck by DUI while standing on the median.	1
b. Pedestrian VPO struck from behind while standing on right side of patrol vehicle.	1
c. Pedestrian VPO struck by inattentive driver while standing on median.	1
d. VPO was struck from behind by DUI.	1
4. Motorcycle patrol:	
a. Driver failed to yield for VPO causing VPO to collide broadside.	5
b. VPO struck by elderly driver who ran a red light.	1
c. VPO drove left of center on curve and collided head-on.	1
d. VPO was struck by 1 or more vehicles as a result of an unsafe lane change.	1
e. VPO working radar exited driveway and was rear-ended.	1
f. VPO swerved to avoid collision with a slow moving vehicle and collided with same.	1
g. VPO splitting lanes on freeway and collided with truck.	1

Section 4.3: Types of Accidental Deaths

Type of Collision	Victim Officers
5. Other:	
a. VPO attempted to join a pursuit and made a u-turn in front of a tractor-trailer and was broadsided.	1
b. VPO, while patrolling, drifted off of roadway and collided with a tree.	1
c. VPO was seated in patrol vehicle issuing a citation when rear-ended by a speeding DUI.	1
Total	28

Person at Fault

This table indicates who was identified as primarily at fault by the traffic accident investigators in the 28 collisions.

Person at Fault	Incidents
Community member	14
Victim peace officer	13
Other or unknown	1
Total	28

4.3.2 Single Vehicle Collisions

In 9 of the 28 vehicle-related collisions, or 32%, the victim peace officer’s vehicle was the only vehicle involved. One of the single vehicle collisions involved a motorcycle.

4.3.3 Primary Factors Contributing to Vehicle Collisions

The primary factors identified for the 28 traffic-related accidental deaths are listed in the following table. In 5 of the 28 collisions, or 18%, drivers under the influence were a factor.

Causes or Contributing Factors of Collisions

Primary Factors	No. of Incidents
Vehicle(s) traveling at high speed	10
Community member turned or pulled in front of oncoming patrol vehicle	6
Pedestrian VPO struck by traffic	4
Community member was DUI	4
Community member broadsided VPO	3
Community member drove into path of patrol vehicle (head-on)	1
Unknown (VPO drifted off road)	1
Total	29

Note: There was more than one factor per incident.

▲ *Conclusion:* In 8 of the 10 high-speed collisions, or 80%, the VPO’s speed was the primary collision factor.

Drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs pose a serious risk to the community and peace officers.

4.3.4 Seatbelt Use (Restraint System)

Seatbelt and restraint system use was a factor in 2 of the 13 fatalities involving patrol vehicle collisions, or 15%. This is a significant decrease compared to the previous 5-year study. In several cases in the current study, it was reported that had the victim peace officer been wearing a seatbelt, the death might have been preventable.

▲ *Conclusion:* Seatbelt use saves lives. The wearing of seatbelts is worthy of discussion at briefings and roll calls and should be ensured by field supervisory audits and inspections.

4.3.5 Motorcycle Patrol Collisions

There has been a significant increase in the number of peace officers killed in accidents while riding agency motorcycles. Of the 28 traffic-related accidental deaths, 11 or 39% occurred in traffic collisions while riding a patrol motorcycle. This total nearly tripled the previous 5-year study’s findings.

Prevention Assessment: Motorcycle Collisions

Motorcycle Collision Determination

- **Preventable:** Four collisions were considered preventable when speed was the factor.
- **Non-Preventable:** Seven collisions were considered non-preventable due to the actions of community drivers. In 4 incidents, a community member failed to yield the right-of-way; in 2 incidents, a community member made illegal left turns in front of VPO; and in one incident, a community member made an unsafe lane change.

4.3.6 Aerial Collisions

One fatal helicopter accident claimed the lives of 2 peace officers, the pilot, and observer. There were no accidents involving fixed-wing aircraft. In fact, it has been more than 18 years since an on-duty California peace officer lost their life in a fixed-wing aircraft incident.

▲ *Conclusion:* Law enforcement aerial operations generally experience far fewer accidents than that of commercial aviation operations. Changes in operational procedures, including pilot safety training and aircraft maintenance, are believed to be responsible for this positive statistic.

4.3.7 Other Types of Accidental Deaths

This section focuses on accidental deaths other than vehicle collisions.

Accidental Discharge: Three officers died from accidental discharges. One accidental discharge involved a shotgun while the other 2 involved handguns.

Friendly Fire: Two peace officers were shot and killed during separate friendly fire incidents. One incident involved a non-uniformed peace officer where identification was a primary issue. The second incident involved a victim peace officer who stepped in front of cover officers that were firing at a suspect.

Training: Victim officer fell from a scaffold while overseeing SWAT training at a military base.

Industrial: Victim officer, while conducting routine maintenance at a range facility, fell from a ladder.

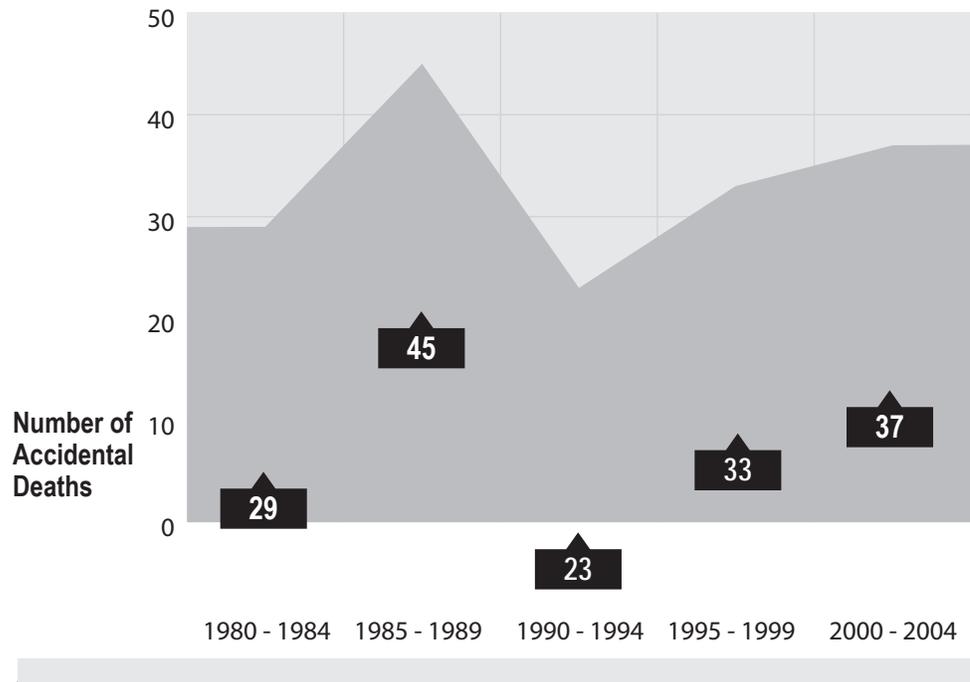
4.3.8 Summary: Accidental Deaths

Unfortunately, accidental deaths of California peace officers have increased since the last 5-year study to an average of 7.4 incidents per year. There were 11 motorcycle officer traffic collisions, which was a significant increase. Unsafe speed was a prevailing factor in the majority of the collisions. Additionally, driving under the influence by 5 community members resulted in accidental peace officer deaths.

**TRENDS:
25-Year Chart**

Over the past 15 years, the number of accidental deaths has increased, as evidenced by the past two LEOKA reports and the current LEOKA Report, ranging from 1990 and 2004. Tragically, a significant number of these deaths were preventable.

This table displays the number of accidental deaths in 5-year increments over a 25-year period.



Chapter 5

**Incident Summaries
2000–2004 Statistics**

This chapter contains the incident summaries regarding the 60 California peace officers who were accidentally killed or murdered in the line of duty between 2000 and 2004. The summaries are divided into two sections:

- Peace officer felonious death summaries
- Accidental death summaries

The summaries are further segregated into subsections based on type of incident. Each summary includes the following information:

- Time of day (military time)
- Age of the victim peace officer
- Experience by number of years
- Incident summary

Section 5.1**Peace Officer Murder Summaries**

The 2000–2004 summaries involved the following incidents:

- Ambush attacks
- Arrest situations
- Assistance request by another law enforcement agency
- Building entry/search operations
- Crimes-in-progress
- Disturbance calls
- Domestic violence incident
- Off-duty incidents
- Pedestrian contacts
- Suspicious circumstances and persons
- Vehicle pullovers
- Vehicle pursuits

5.1.1 Ambush Attacks

1. 23:08 hours Age: 31 Experience: 11 years

Two rival street gangs were involved in a territorial battle. One gang was poised to attack the rival gang when an unmarked 2-officer police vehicle entered the area. The suspects chose to fire upon the officers' vehicle rather than the rival gang members. The suspects' assault rifle gunfire killed the VPO. The suspects were later arrested.

2. 01:55 hours Age: 31 Experience: 4 years

The VPO entered a gas station to fuel his patrol vehicle. VPO exited his vehicle and sustained a fatal gunshot wound from a suspect who was waiting to ambush the officer. Within an hour of the incident, VPO was located by fellow officers. The suspect was arrested 7 days later.

3. 11:00 hours Age: 46 Experience: 23 years

The VPO had returned to a house to collect additional homicide investigation evidence. The VPO believed the house was vacant. While the VPO searched the home for evidence, the suspect surprised and immediately shot the VPO 8 times with a handgun. Two days later, the suspect was located, shot, and killed in an exchange of gunfire with other officers.

4. 14:48 hours Age: 35 Experience: 5 years

The VPO exited a courthouse after testifying in several traffic matters. The VPO was walking across a parking lot to his car when a vehicle came to a stop alongside him. The driver (a "wanna be" gang member) fired several rounds from a semi-automatic weapon, mortally wounding the VPO. The 16-year-old suspect was arrested the following day.

Section 5.1: Peace Officer Murder Summaries

5.1.2 Arrest Situations

1. 14:45 hours Age: 50 Experience: 21 years

During a search for a person wanted for an outstanding felony arrest warrant, the VPO and another peace officer entered a home. As they searched the building, the suspect physically attacked the peace officers. During the struggle, the suspect produced a handgun and fired shots at the peace officers to facilitate his escape. One of the shots struck the VPO in the head, resulting in his death. The suspect was then shot and apprehended by other officers while attempting to escape.

2. 14:28 hours Age: 32 Experience: 11 years

The VPO was a detective who responded to assist other peace officers with a loud party disturbance call at a two-story building. While peace officers arrested someone downstairs, the arrestee's brother emerged from upstairs, shooting and killing the VPO. The suspect, a probationer, was arrested 6 days later.

5.1.3 Assistance Request By Another Law Enforcement Agency

1. 08:35 hours Age: 40 Experience: 17 years

The VPO's agency was assisting a federal agency with a search warrant service at a residence. Agents and officers were met with gunfire as they entered the residence. The suspect was upstairs firing an assault rifle when the VPO, a motorcycle officer, arrived at the scene. Upon arrival, the VPO assumed a containment position behind a car. After exchanging gunfire with the suspect from that position, the VPO was struck by rifle fire. The suspect later died in a house fire that occurred during the standoff.

5.1.4 Building Entry/Search Operations

1. 18:41 hours Age: 61 Experience: 25 years

Age: 26 Experience: 4 years

While the VPO took a report of an assault and theft of weapons at a substation, he requested backup. He and an additional VPO responded to and entered the suspect's cabin to affect an arrest. As the VPOs proceeded down a short hallway leading to the living room, the suspect quickly entered the hallway from the living room and fired several rounds from a 9mm Glock handgun. One VPO died instantly. The second VPO returned fire and fatally wounded the suspect before succumbing to his injuries.

2. 18:45 hours Age: 26 Experience: 4 years

Peace officers responded to a suspicious person call at a residence in a rural area, and began searching for the suspect who had left before they arrived. During this search, the officers determined that someone had possibly entered the neighbor's house. Prior to entering this residence to search, the officers had been on scene for over an hour. Upon entering the living room, the VPO was shot by the suspect who had armed himself with a shotgun from the residence and was lying in wait. The suspect was later arrested in the residence by tactical team officers.

5.1.5 Crime-in-Progress

1. 10:36 hours Age: 42 Experience: 18 years

Peace officers responded to a suburban residence on a shots fired call. Upon arrival, the officers observed a male run inside the residence. As the officers approached on foot, they heard screaming and observed a male holding a woman hostage. The VPO tried to kick in the front door, failing on his first try. As the VPO prepared to try again, the suspect fired 2 shots from inside with a handgun. One round passed through the VPO's right arm and then traveled through an opening in his body armor, striking his chest. The suspect was later arrested by responding units.

5.1.6 Disturbance Call

1. 09:41 hours Age: 45 Experience: 23 years

Peace officers were dispatched to a family disturbance involving a 25-year-old son refusing to leave the home. The VPO was first on scene and contacted the parents outside the residence. The parents advised that their son was homeless and suffered from schizophrenia. The VPO entered the residence alone and contacted the suspect who was sitting on a couch. The VPO drew his baton and a struggle ensued. The suspect gained control of the baton and struck the VPO several times on the head while the VPO lay prone on the ground. The first backup officer that arrived on scene confronted the suspect who was still armed with the baton. The suspect was shot and killed by the backup officer.

5.1.7 Domestic Violence Incident

1. 12:45 hours Age: 31 Experience: 2.5 years

Two peace officers responded to a second floor apartment regarding a domestic violence incident. While one officer was talking to a female resident, the VPO contacted a male resident. During a pat down search, the VPO shouted that the suspect had a gun. As both peace officers were attempting to leave the residence, the VPO exchanged gunfire with the suspect. Although the VPO was shot, both peace officers were able to exit the apartment and return to the street. While taking positions of cover and containment, they again exchanged gunfire with the suspect as he fled the scene. The VPO died later at the hospital and the suspect was captured.

5.1.8 Off-Duty Incident

1. 05:35 hours Age: 53 Experience: 30 years

The VPO was off-duty on a bicycle ride when he was confronted by 2 gang members. The suspects attempted to rob the VPO with an assault rifle. As the suspects approached the VPO, shots were exchanged and the VPO was struck. The VPO fired and struck one of the suspects and their

vehicle. The VPO was able to give responding officers a description of the 2 suspects before succumbing to his injuries. One suspect was arrested a short time later in the vehicle and the injured suspect was arrested at a nearby hospital.

5.1.9 Pedestrian Contact

1. **21:34 hours** **Age: 29** **Experience: 8 years**

The VPO and his partner observed the suspect acting suspiciously in a known crime area. The officers called to the suspect, who began walking away. Without warning, the suspect turned and started shooting at the peace officers with an automatic assault rifle. Both officers were hit by the suspect's gunfire. The VPO's wounds were fatal and the suspect was later arrested.

5.1.10 Suspicious Persons/Circumstances

1. **11:43 hours** **Age: 46** **Experience: 12 years**

The VPO was conducting a trespass investigation in a rural area when a witness heard shots fired. Responding units located the VPO's vehicle in the driveway of a residence, but could not locate the VPO. An area search was initiated and the VPO was found approximately 3/4 of a mile away from his vehicle. The VPO had sustained gunshot wounds to his extremities and upper torso during an exchange of gunfire with the suspect. The suspect was located 6 days later in a residence 2 miles from the crime scene. After exchanging gunfire with SWAT Team members, the suspect died in a fire at the residence.

2. **18:30 hours** **Age: 26** **Experience: 10 months**

The VPO responded to assist another peace officer who was conducting a vehicle stop in a neighborhood with significant crime. As the officers approached the suspect's vehicle, 2 suspects fired at the peace officers with automatic weapons. Both officers returned fire, striking and killing one of the suspects. However, both peace officers were struck by the suspect's gunfire and the VPO died in surgery. Several days later, the second suspect was arrested.

5.1.11 Vehicle Stops

1. 04:30 hours Age: 24 Experience: 9 months

When the VPO conducted a vehicle stop, he made contact with the suspect at the driver's door. The suspect fired a single shot, striking the VPO in the head. The suspect was later identified and arrested.

2. 10:39 hours Age: 33 Experience: 8 years

When the VPO stopped a vehicle with 3 occupants, the driver exited his vehicle and approached the patrol vehicle. The VPO stopped the driver and began a pat down search. During the search, the suspect drew a handgun and shot the VPO. The suspect fled the United States. Months later, the suspect was captured in Mexico and returned to California.

3. 23:45 hours Age: 47 Experience: 3 years

Minutes before he was stopped by the VPO, the suspect had been involved in a drive-by shooting. The VPO made the vehicle stop for an unknown reason prior to the crime broadcast. The suspect shot the VPO once with a rifle at a close range near the suspect's vehicle. The VPO was riding alone and it was believed there was only one occupant in the suspect vehicle. There were no witnesses to this incident and further details are unknown. Several days later the suspect was shot and killed when he exchanged gunfire with other peace officers.

4. 17:05 hours Age: 27 Experience: 11 months

The VPO conducted a traffic stop in a parking lot, and asked the suspect for identification and registration. As the VPO looked at the paperwork provided by the suspect, the suspect quickly retrieved a handgun and fired at the VPO, striking the neck and upper portion of the body armor. Although the body armor was penetrated, the VPO returned fire and struck the suspect. The suspect exited his vehicle and continued firing, striking the VPO. The VPO attempted to move away from the suspect, but the suspect took the VPO's firearm and fired until it was empty. The suspect then pistol whipped the VPO and fled in the VPO's patrol vehicle. The suspect was later arrested.

5. 19:23 hours Age: 34 years Experience: 7 years

The VPO stopped a vehicle occupied by a known gang member on parole. The VPO asked the parolee to step from the vehicle and began a pat-down search. The parolee then pushed the VPO away and ran. The VPO gave chase on foot. During the foot pursuit, the parolee turned and fired at the VPO, striking him twice. The parolee was arrested 17 days later.

5.1.12 Vehicle Pursuit

1. 12:10 hours Age: 38 Experience: 13 years

The VPO, a motor officer, was in pursuit of a stolen truck. The suspect led the VPO onto residential streets and made a U-turn. The VPO pulled to the side of the road to let the suspect pass and to continue the pursuit. The suspect intentionally drove toward the VPO. The VPO attempted to dismount his police motorcycle and run to safety when the suspect ran the VPO over.

Section 5.2

Accidental Death Incident Summaries

This section provides a brief summary of the accidental peace officer deaths. Incident types include:

- Accidental discharges
- Aerial collision
- Friendly fire incidents
- Industrial incident
- Motorcycle patrol traffic collisions
- Patrol vehicle traffic collisions
- Pedestrian officers struck by traffic
- Training exercise

5.2.1

Accidental Discharges

1. 06:50 hrs Age: 46 Experience: 10 years

While attending training, VPO dropped his department issued weapon in the parking lot of the training agency, causing it to strike the hammer and discharge. The round struck the VPO in the head.

2. 05:38 hrs Age: 52 Experience: 22 years

VPO was a traffic officer preparing for duty at his residence. When the VPO placed his department issued semi-automatic pistol in the holster, the firearm discharged and struck the VPO in the side. VPO died at the scene.

3. 06:00 hrs Age: 39 Experience: 19 years

VPO was placing a shotgun in a patrol vehicle at the beginning of his shift. The VPO was placing the shotgun in an electronic locking device between the two front seats. The shotgun accidentally discharged, striking the VPO in the head.

5.2.2 Aerial Collision

-
1. 21:00 hrs Age: 49 Experience: 27 years
 Age: 56 Experience: 28 years

Two VPOs, one pilot and one observer, were returning in a helicopter from a scheduled maintenance flight and crashed due to inclement weather.

5.2.3 Friendly Fire Incidents

-
1. 23:14 hrs Age: 29 Experience: 7 years

VPO was working in an undercover plainclothes capacity on a narcotics investigation. The VPO became involved in the pursuit of a stolen vehicle. The driver fled from the vehicle on foot and a perimeter was established. The VPO confronted the suspect as he was observed exiting a backyard. The VPO held the suspect at gunpoint in a prone position as uniformed officers arrived. The uniformed officers shot the undercover VPO, not recognizing him as a police officer.

-
2. 22:00 hrs Age: 35 Experience: 13 years

VPO responded to a report of a “man with a gun” call. When cover units arrived, the suspect exited the second floor unit and began firing. The VPO moved to avoid the suspect’s fire. However, the VPO stepped into the line of fire from cover units and was struck by their gunfire.

5.2.4 Industrial Incident

-
1. 15:00 hrs Age: 64 Experience: 40 years

VPO fell from a ladder while performing maintenance at a training facility.

5.2.5 Motorcycle Patrol Traffic Collisions

1. 10:10 hrs Age: 36 Experience: 10 years

VPO was on motorcycle patrol when an elderly female driver ran a red light and struck the VPO.

2. 15:00 hrs Age: 33 Experience: 11 years

VPO was operating his motorcycle while following his training officer. While negotiating a wide sweeping right curve on a downgrade, VPO crossed into the oncoming traffic lane to avoid sand in the roadway and was struck head on by a vehicle.

3. 12:25 hrs Age: 38 Experience: 17 years

VPO was operating a motorcycle when a vehicle pulled in front of him from an intersecting street. VPO struck the vehicle and was thrown from the motorcycle.

4. 23:07 hrs Age: 39 Experience: 13 years

VPO was on motorcycle patrol on a freeway and observed a collision occur. VPO activated the emergency lights on the motorcycle. One of the vehicles involved in the collision drove into the path of the VPO. VPO was unable to avoid the collision and was struck by the vehicle

5. 14:15 hrs Age: 31 Experience: 6 years

VPO was on motorcycle patrol when a driver under the influence made an illegal left turn, directly in the path of the VPO. The VPO was struck and catapulted approximately 150 feet as a result.

6. 15:30 hrs Age: 45 Experience: 23 years

VPO was working radar enforcement and observed a traffic violation. VPO entered the traffic lane to initiate a vehicle stop. VPO entered the traffic lane in the path of another vehicle and was struck from behind.

7. 12:55 hrs Age: 46 Experience: 24 years

VPO was riding a motorcycle behind an ambulance on a highway. The ambulance swerved to avoid a slow moving truck. The VPO also attempted an evasive maneuver but collided with the truck.

8. 16:32 hrs Age: 46 Experience: 17 years

VPO was riding a motorcycle on a city street when an elderly driver drove into the path of the VPO from a side street. VPO's motorcycle struck the vehicle on the driver's side. The elderly driver also sustained fatal injuries.

9. 12:16 hrs Age: 48 Experience: 20 years

VPO was riding a motorcycle while attempting to overtake a vehicle believed to have been involved in a hit and run. As the VPO entered an intersection, a van turned left directly into the path of VPO, throwing him from his motorcycle.

10. 14:11 hrs Age: 39 Experience: 15 years

VPO was driving a motorcycle and was riding between 2 travel lanes in stop and go traffic when a tractor-trailer truck changed lanes, striking the VPO. The truck driver left the scene and was later arrested.

11. 13:30 hrs Age: 43 Experience: 8 years

VPO was riding a motorcycle through an intersection when the driver of an SUV ran a red light and struck the VPO.

5.2.6 Patrol Vehicle Traffic Collisions

1. 02:30 hrs Age: 26 Experience: 5 years

VPO was responding to an officer back-up call. The VPO failed to negotiate a curve while traveling at a high rate of speed, ran off the road, and struck a fixed object. VPO was not wearing a seat belt.

Section 5.2: Accidental Death Incident Summaries

2. 23:35 hrs Age: 37 Experience: 6 Years

VPO was responding to a call for assistance at an unsafe speed, lost control of vehicle, and collided with a tree.

3. 02:30 hrs Age: 45 Experience: 22 years

VPO was engaged in enforcement action on a state highway. VPO had emergency lights activated and was traveling at a high rate of speed, lost control of his vehicle, skidded across 2 traffic lanes and collided with a guardrail, causing the vehicle to flip over.

4. 22:54 hrs Age: 51 Experience: 12 years

VPO was responding to a back-up call from another law enforcement agency. The VPO initiated a U-turn on a state highway and was struck by a commercial tractor/trailer.

5. 06:59 hrs Age: 36 Experience: 12 years

VPO was attempting to overtake a speeding motorist that just exited an off-ramp. VPO lost control of the vehicle while exiting the same off-ramp and was killed when the VPO's vehicle struck a tree and overturned.

6. 22:30 hrs Age: 38 Experience: 2 years

VPO was responding Code Three at a high rate of speed to an officer back-up call. As the vehicle entered an intersection, it struck another Code Three unit, which was responding to the same call and also traveling at a high rate of speed.

7. 04:30 hrs Age: 45 Experience: 45 years

VPO was traveling at the speed limit on an interstate highway. VPO drifted off the road for unknown reasons and struck a tree. VPO was wearing a seatbelt.

Chapter 5: Incident Summaries

8. 00:03 hrs Age: 27 Experience: 2 years

VPO was driving an unmarked vehicle assigned to directed patrol. VPO had just stopped at a two-way stop intersection and was proceeding forward when a vehicle being pursued by an outside agency broadsided his vehicle in excess of 100 miles an hour. The VPO was unaware of the pursuit.

9. 19:30 hrs Age: 49 Experience: 20 years

VPO was driving an unmarked vehicle on a two-lane roadway. A driver in the opposite lane drove into the VPO's lane in an effort to pass another vehicle. The driver collided with the VPO head on. VPO died and the passenger officer survived.

10. 08:28 hrs Age: 49 Experience: 23 years

VPO was seated in his vehicle preparing a citation during a traffic stop on the right shoulder. VPO's vehicle was struck from behind by a driver under the influence. The collision caused the VPO's vehicle to be pushed under the trailer portion of the big rig that had been stopped by the VPO.

11. 21:40 hrs Age: 66 Experience: 21 years

VPO and partner on patrol observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed and attempted to stop the vehicle. The VPO's vehicle left the roadway while attempting to negotiate a turn, striking a large rock and causing the vehicle to roll over and the VPO was ejected. VPO was not wearing a seat belt. VPO's partner, who was wearing a seat belt, survived the collision.

12. 11:15 hrs Age: 47 Experience: 25 years

VPO was responding Code Three to an emergency plane crash at a local airport. VPO approached a four-way intersection where a vehicle failed to yield the right of way. VPO attempted evasive action but still made contact, causing his vehicle to impact a tree.

Section 5.2: Accidental Death Incident Summaries

5.2.7

13. 16:35 hrs Age: 35 Experience: 4 years

VPO was responding to a call for service at a high rate of speed, lost control of the vehicle, and left the roadway. His vehicle overturned and the VPO was ejected. The VPO was not wearing a seatbelt.

Pedestrian Officers Struck by Traffic

1. 01:19 hrs Age: 51 Experience: 12 years

VPO made a traffic stop and was approaching the vehicle on the driver's side. While VPO was approaching the vehicle, the VPO was struck from behind by a driver under the influence.

2. 06:11 hrs Age: 33 Experience: 11years

VPO was investigating a traffic collision and obtaining measurements in the center medium. A driver under the influence traveling at a high rate of speed, veered into the center median to pass another vehicle that was going the speed limit in the number one lane. The driver struck the VPO and fled the scene.

3. 06:01 hrs Age: 31 Experience: 7 years

VPO made a traffic stop and returned to the right side of his vehicle to start a traffic citation. A driver under the influence traveling at a high rate of speed drove onto the right shoulder of the roadway, striking the VPO's vehicle. VPO was thrown approximately 70 feet.

4. 13:31 hrs Age: 42 Experience: 19 years

VPO was operating stationary radar while standing in the roadway and motioning violators to the curb. VPO was distracted and was struck by the vehicle that was being motioned to pull to the curb.

5.2.8 Training Exercise

1. 15:00 hrs Age: 52 Experience: 30 years

VPO was conducting training for SWAT officers at a live fire shoot house. While sitting on a catwalk above the training facility, VPO fell backwards to the floor below. VPO died as a result of the injuries sustained in the fall.

Appendix: Web Links and Web Addresses (URL)

This table lists the links within this publication by page number and their corresponding web addresses.

Page	Link in Publication	Web Address (URL)
4	Copyright/Trademark Protection	http://www.post.ca.gov/conditions/#copyright
4	Publications.Manager@post.ca.gov	mailto:Publications.Manager@post.ca.gov
31	Uniform Crime Report on Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted	http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm
82	Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines	http://post.ca.gov/vehicle_pursuit/pdf/vp_guidelines.pdf
85	Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC)	http://caag.state.ca.us/cjsc/
85	Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program	http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm
98	California Department of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics Center	http://ag.ca.gov/cjsc/

