

# BOLO

## Be On the Lookout

The Newsletter for the Los Angeles Airport Peace Officers Association



[www.laapoa.com](http://www.laapoa.com)

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## On the Road With the LAXPD Motorcycle Unit

With LAX passenger volume continuing to rise to record levels and a multibillion-dollar makeover generating extensive construction projects in multiple terminals, ensuring the safe and efficient transit of pedestrians and vehicles is more important, and difficult, than ever. Darting easily through even the heaviest gridlock, the Los Angeles Airport Police Department's Motorcycle Unit manages traffic on the airport's many thoroughfares while keeping a vigilant eye out for security threats and providing a rapid response to emergency incidents.

The LAXPD Motorcycle Unit was created after the September 11, 2001, attacks highlighted the need for increased security at U.S. airports. As a high-profile terrorist target, LAX wanted to boost the visibility of its police officers, and increasing their mobility was a key tactic. The airport had previously been patrolled by LAPD motor officers, but LAX determined that it would be more economical and effective to have its own specialized unit. The first three LAXPD motor officers graduated from training on September 17, 2003, and the unit has since grown to 24 officers and three sergeants. "Today as you enter LAX, you will most likely see a motor officer before any other law enforcement officer," says Police Officer III Ray Rouzan, a member of the unit since 2014.

The main mission of the Motorcycle Unit is to promote safety by maintaining an orderly flow of airport traffic, thereby reducing injury collisions and property damage. Duties include issuing citations for equipment and parking violations, directing traffic, investigating all vehicle collisions in and around LAX, and providing a high-visibility uniformed presence in the central terminal area and around the airport perimeter. Motor officers



also support other Department personnel as needed, such as augmenting security at special events like labor protests and demonstrations, or assisting the Dignitary Protection Unit upon request.

To ride their Kawasaki Kz1000s adeptly in any possible situation, Motorcycle Unit officers undergo rigorous training, consisting of a five-week "pre-school" plus a grueling two-week LAPD motor school. "You have to become one with that motorcycle," says Rouzan. "You have to master every aspect of that bike. We ride on all different surfaces — concrete,

asphalt, dirt, gravel, up inclines, braking. It weeds out the casual weekend rider."

All this hard work and careful preparation is essential for meeting the unique challenges that motor officers face daily. "Riding a motorcycle is inherently dangerous — probably one of the most dangerous jobs in law enforcement," says Rouzan. "One mistake on that motorcycle can have life-ending or life-altering consequences."

The risks are great, but so are the rewards, especially for officers who relish the thrill of life on two wheels. "The best part about the unit is riding a motorcycle all day," says Rouzan. "You have to love it; it has to be a passion. When I ride, I feel free — I don't feel trapped like I do when I'm in a patrol car."

The unit's camaraderie and respect for their work is another outstanding feature, he says. "All of the officers on the unit feel like we are a tight-knit family. Each and every member regards it with a lot of pride because of everything that went into earning it."

Read more about the Motorcycle Unit at [www.laapoa.com](http://www.laapoa.com).

# Lawless Drone Use Poses a Growing Danger to Air Traffic

Once the stuff of science fiction, drones are now becoming a regular feature of our skies. Thanks to rapid technological advances, anyone can buy a small, powerful unmanned aircraft system (UAS) online for less than \$500, and the military, law enforcement, businesses and hobbyists find more uses for remote-controlled fliers every day. This skyrocketing popularity is far outpacing regulators' ability to keep up with the new era of aviation, which means growing safety risks — especially when drones end up on a collision course with passenger planes.

Citing recent “reckless use of unmanned model aircraft near airports and involving large crowds of people,” in June 2014 the FAA restricted unauthorized use of recreational drones under 55 pounds (commercial drones are currently banned until the FAA can issue official regulations). In a new interpretation of existing federal rules, the agency mandated that drones cannot fly within five miles of an airport without permission from the control tower, and the UAS must stay below 400 feet in altitude and within eyesight of its operator.

Unfortunately, the measures appear to do little to prevent drones flying too high and too close to airports. In February 2015, after a UAS almost collided with a Southwest Airlines jet approaching LAX at 4,000 feet, LAAPOA added to the chorus of voices calling on Congress and the FAA to ensure that airports are protected from intentional and unintentional drone interference.

“While LAAPOA respects the rights of individuals to use and enjoy their drones, California pilots had the highest number of close calls with unmanned aircraft in 2014,” says President Marshall McClain. “We remain extremely concerned about the high security risks that drones present at our airports. Public policymakers should act decisively to protect travelers from the misuse of these aircraft, especially by those who seek to disrupt air travel and inflict severe harm on America.”

To read more about the issue of drone use at airports, visit [www.laapoa.com](http://www.laapoa.com).



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The Board of Directors meets quarterly on the third Thursday of January, April, July and October at the LAAPOA Headquarters. Additional meetings and/or times are subject to change and will be posted as they occur.

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## 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Special Olympics Los Angeles

[www.specialolympics.org/los-angeles-2015.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/los-angeles-2015.aspx)  
July 25 to August 2

### Westchester Park Back-to-School Night

August 29

### Christmas Party

December 12 (tentative)

## VAAU Works Behind the Scenes to Ensure Airport Security

Maintaining security at the third-busiest airport in the country is a complex undertaking that requires the participation of all members of the LAX community in complying with federal, state and local regulations. Serving as the LAXPD's main liaison between airport tenants and the Transportation Security Administration, officers in the Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Unit (VAAU) have the important responsibility of coordinating security programs at LAWA airports.

## Composed Under Pressure: The LAXPD Communications Unit

Most jobs involve communications skills, but emergency response calls require true professionals to handle life-or-death situations. The small but highly efficient LAXPD Communications

Unit fills that vital role at LAX and Van Nuys airports 24/7, managing all public safety communications. Charged with protecting life and property by prioritizing calls and dispatching personnel, the team handles an average of 12,000 incidents per month. In addition to receiving and dispatching outside calls for service, the Communications Unit maintains situational awareness and officer status in the field and also collaborates with various on-site public safety agencies.

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