

# 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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## President's Message

With the first anniversary of the LAX shooting incident approaching, not much has changed at the airport — and a similar incident could easily occur again. LAAPOA continues to call out ongoing problems at LAX to spotlight the lack of progress by airport management. Below are some brief bullet points on issues that last November's shooting highlighted, with nothing done so far by airport management to remedy these concerns.

### Split Policing Model

No other airport in the country has split policing like LAX's dangerously disjointed model of proprietary airport police being unnecessarily supplemented by city police (LAPD). This was on full display post-apprehension of the November 1 shooter, when three chains of command were established — including one by the airport police and one by the LAPD. These were eventually merged into one LAXPD command, but not before chaos ensued. The 80-page after-action report of the shooting, commissioned by LAX's leadership, questioned the uncoordinated LAPD post-incident response, which was at cross purposes with airport police.

### Lack of Resources for Airport Police

The after-action report also highlighted the underfunding of policing resources, including LAXPD's woefully inadequate incident command post vehicle. The report noted that the vehicle used by the airport police as the central command during the shooting had "only basic supplies and lacked essential resources." It did not have the ability to access CCTV feeds nor aerial video downlink capabilities. The after-action report even encouraged airport management to procure a "modern mobile ICP [Incident Command Post] vehicle." Our officers have repeatedly requested this upgrade, in writing and verbally, and have been informed that funding restrictions prevent the procurement of a modern mobile command center.

### Underfunding Airport Police

As LAX has expanded physically and increased passenger levels, the number of LAXPD sworn officers has steadily declined to its lowest level since 2008 (statistics from the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training study). For context, when the November 1 shooting took place, there were only two officers assigned to the entire Terminal 3 at LAX, which is

typical. Another timely example of LAWAs's underfunding of airport police is the lack of proper equipment to deal with the Ebola outbreak. Airport police, who are the first on the scene to any incident at the airport or on-board an aircraft, have not been supplied with the highest level of hazmat protection gear to deal with the deadly Ebola virus.



The concerns listed above are the direct result of the diversion of funds from the airport to the City of Los Angeles. The expansion of LAX's international terminal and general passenger traffic growth, juxtaposed with the City's economic downturn and financial mismanagement, have made airport coffers appealing for City raids that have steadily increased over the past few years, while taking away from the resources needed for airport police.

As you know, LAX is still considered the highest terrorist target on the West Coast. The policing and security gaps that exist at LAX are clear. The solutions are not that complicated, but it all comes down to money that LAX says it does not have — despite the fact that airport management continues to spend billions of dollars on cosmetic enhancements and divert monies to the City. Airport police want our airport to be the gold standard, and not just from a marketing and economic standpoint. Functionality and safety must be among the top priorities.

MARSHALL E. McCLAIN  
President



## Unique Beat: Patrolling Van Nuys Airport Requires a Personal Approach

Although it's the smallest force in the LAWAPD system, officers at Van Nuys Airport have a wide scope of general policing duties, with responsibility for patrolling the entire 730-acre facility, its 100 onsite businesses, additional surrounding LAWA properties and the Van Nuys Flyaway bus terminal.

## Lights, Camera, Inaction: Where Are the Promised LAX Security Improvements?

Now that the media frenzy has died down and the spotlight has been diverted elsewhere, crickets are all we hear from LAWA regarding progress on advised security improvements after the November 1, 2013, shooting at LAX.

## It's Time to Shine a Light on LAXPD's Management and Operations Practices

With personnel complaints on the rise and morale on the decline in the LAXPD — in an environment of ever-increasing demands on airport policing services — LAAPOA calls on the Office of the Inspector General to investigate operations and accelerate the adoption of best practices by the Department.



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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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## Two in One: L.A./Ontario Airport Safety Officers Perform Dual Duties

When it comes to maintaining public safety, the L.A./Ontario division of the Los Angeles Airport Police Department takes an approach that's unique among airports in the region: In addition to being sworn peace officers, its members are also fully trained and state-certified as firefighters and emergency medical technicians. These multitasking airport safety officers (ASOs) maximize their manpower to protect the airport, its personnel and travelers both efficiently and effectively.

Los Angeles World Airports assumed responsibility for operating L.A./Ontario Airport (ONT) in 1967, using its clout to bring in more airlines and flights to help the small, struggling facility expand into a regional — and eventually international — airport serving the Inland Empire. One consideration involved in this growth was finding the best way to address the airport's increasing safety and security needs. In 1970, a few days after retiring as a battalion chief for the Los Angeles Fire Department, David T. Nave became the first chief of ONT's new ASO program, which he would lead for the next 30 years. Under Chief Nave's direction, the program combined daily police and fire functions to respond to any airport or aircraft emergency.

In addition to its many security regulations, the FAA mandates Airport Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) operations at all U.S. airports that serve passenger air carriers. The ASO program meets these requirements in the most economical way possible by providing both services at once. While the model is distinctive in Southern California, it is used by many other airports across the country, including Dallas/Fort Worth, Anchorage and Newark. Not only is this approach cost-effective, but it also offers great flexibility. Cross-training all on-duty officers to handle a variety of roles makes the most of a smaller force. Once ASOs arrive on the scene of an incident and evaluate the resources needed, they can deploy additional fire or law enforcement personnel accordingly, quickly adapting to the situation at hand.

From its initial staff of eight, the force has now grown to 43 ASOs — 40 performing dual duty and another three assigned as K-9 handlers. They operate around the clock every day of the year, working 24-hour shifts 10 days a month on one of three platoons. A typical day



consists of 16 hours in the fire station and 8 hours on police watch, rotating about once a month between day, swing and grave shifts.

Not surprisingly, fulfilling so many different responsibilities in the course of a single day requires a high level of expertise. When the program began, ASOs only attended a Level 1 policing course, but they now complete the police academy as well as the fire academy, required emergency medical training, annual qualifications and on-the-job training to maintain their proficiency in all areas. In addition, many ASOs are certified in hazardous materials and urban search and rescue, and others are certified and deployed as explosives-detection K-9 handlers. Retaining all this knowledge and practicing the entire range of duties effectively can be challenging, so it takes a special type of individual to succeed as an ASO. The complexity of the job also means a steep learning curve for management, whose ranks tend to come from police backgrounds and are less familiar with fire operations.

Despite the difficulties inherent in dual-duty work, ASOs have proven themselves up to the task of safeguarding the airport against a wide range of threats. "This program has worked well for more than 40 years and continues to work, given the proper management knowledge and understanding," says ASO Robert Mainwaring, who represents ONT on the LAAPOA Board. "The program also saves a lot of money; it would require double the budget to provide the same level of service with two separate entities. Nearly every cop is a firefighter and every firefighter a cop at ONT."



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