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“Operation Watchdog” Targets 1,000 Registered Sex Offenders

SAFE Team Checks Known Offenders in Countywide Sweep

The San Diego [SAFE \(Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement\) Task Force](#) conducted “Operation Watchdog,” on Wednesday, June 22, a countywide sweep to locate registered sex offenders in San Diego County and investigate their status. Ninety-one teams comprised of more than 300 local, state and federal law enforcement officers fanned out across the county in the early morning hours. Authorities were successful in contacting more than 800 known sex offenders, most of whom are not on parole or probation. Each of the search teams were assisted by drug and firearm-sniffing dogs.

By the end of the day, law enforcement had knocked on 1012 doors where sex offenders were known to live. “We want offenders in San Diego to know they are being actively watched. Our goal was to verify they are complying with registration laws, and to identify any illegal activity they might be engaged in,” said David Collazo, Commander of the SAFE Task Force. Although SAFE does conduct on-going audits in targeted areas throughout the year, yesterday we were able to contact sex offenders in every corner of San Diego County and remind them that they are being watched closely.”

Sixty-one registered sex offenders were found to be out of compliance and investigations have been opened on them. There were 14 arrests for various violations of parole or probation conditions and one arrest for a suspected homicide. The remaining individuals contacted were found to be in compliance with the law and living at their registered address. “That’s a good indicator that offenders in this community know we take the registration laws very seriously,” Collazo noted.

During the countywide sweep, there were also 75 searches done resulting in the seizure of pornography, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, laptops, smart phones, digital media, alcohol and children’s clothing and toys.

“This kind of unprecedented cooperation between law enforcement agencies is what makes San Diego unique in its approach to sex offender management,” said Collazo. “We know all too well that monitoring known offenders closely is critical to public safety. SAFE and its partner agencies are committed to aggressively meeting that challenge.”

(more)

Members of almost every local, state and federal law enforcement agency in San Diego participated in the operation by providing names of identified targets and by joining the audit and search teams. Canines were important search team members used to identify the presence of illegal drugs or firearms for those offenders on probation or parole. In total, 34 local, state and national law enforcement agencies participated in Operation Watchdog.

The SAFE Task Force was established in San Diego County almost a decade ago. Its mission is to diminish sex crimes and sexually-motivated crimes and apprehend the responsible offenders, thereby increasing public safety. Currently, there are about 4,000 registered sex offenders living in San Diego County. Already this year, the SAFE team conducted 1,477 regional audits and assisted local law enforcement in more than 45 criminal investigations.

Participating agencies in Operation Watchdog included:

- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation/Adult Parole
- California Department of Justice/Bureau of Investigation
- California Highway Patrol
- California State University, San Marcos Police Department
- Carlsbad Police Department
- Chula Vista Police Department
- Coronado Police Department
- El Cajon Police Department
- Escondido Police Department
- FBI/Department of Justice
- Grossmont/Cuyamaca Community College Police Department
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement /Department of Homeland Security
- Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force
- La Mesa Police Department
- Law Enforcement Coordination Center
- Mira Costa Community College Police Department
- Naval Criminal Investigative Service/Department of the Navy
- National City Police Department
- Oceanside Police Department
- San Diego City Schools Police Department
- San Diego Community College Police Department
- San Diego County District Attorney/Bureau of Investigation
- San Diego Harbor Police
- San Diego Police Department
- San Diego County Probation Department
- San Diego County Sheriff Department
- San Diego State University Police Department
- San Diego Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement Task Force [SAFE]
- Southwestern College Police Department
- University of California, San Diego, Police Department
- University of San Diego Public Safety Department
- U.S. Border Patrol
- U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
- U.S. Marshal
- U.S. Probation Office

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