



The purpose of this briefing bulletin is to give you topics to consider prior to an incident, generate conversation and make you, your partners and your families safer. Each of these briefing bulletins will include two topics appropriate for discussion. All officers should know their agency's policy regarding off-duty incidents.

We need to realize any of us could get involved in an off-duty violent encounter today. An active shooter may attack your child's school as your dropping them off, you could be followed home from your station, you could be targeted for a robbery when you stop to gas up your personal vehicle, you might see a lone uniformed officer in a fight on the way home, or you and your family could be in a restaurant during a take-over robbery. Are you ready?



TOPIC ONE: **BLENDING**

Off-duty consider yourself undercover. You have the element of surprise that you are an armed officer and that is mostly what is keeping you safe. Based on reviews of hundreds of actual off-duty incidents, rarely is identifying yourself as an officer going to protect you.

Rule #1: Don't dress like an off-duty cop

Start looking at how civilians actually dress. It's not all jeans and black t-shirts. Ask suspects you arrest how they spot off-duty or undercover cops when they are out capering. Often they have told us cops will have their badge case visible in addition to a wallet in their back pocket, they have silver beaded chains visible around their neck for a badge holder, they don't wear jewelry and they will have law enforcement or firearm related t-shirts.

Rule #2: Don't let your behavior give you away

As law enforcement officers we are trained to be observant and that is what gives us situational awareness and keeps us safer than the general public. We need to be just as observant when we are off-duty however, we need to be discreet about it. Far too often our eyes give us away. A typical civilian going about their daily travels will not make nearly as much eye contact with a stranger as law enforcement officers do. Bad guys quickly pick up on our level of observation and lack of fear and know we are cops. Our civilian family members will recognize danger when it becomes much more obvious, but they often rationalize it and never act on it. An outstanding book to help them learn to trust their instincts and react as soon as they detect danger is called, "The Gift of Fear".

Rule #3: Don't immediately disarm just because you are home

our home is not a safe zone! You or your family can be targeted because of your official duties, however, much more frequently officers are murdered in their homes just because a suspect decides to make them one of their random victims. Four of the last 11 Los Angeles Sheriff's Deputies murdered were killed at home with the suspects not knowing they were law enforcement officers.

In 2009 Las Vegas Metro Officer Nettleton saved his family including his 2 month old daughter because he had his handgun on him when 3 armed gang members walked into his garage shortly after getting home.



TOPIC TWO: **FAMILY SAFETY PLAN**

When you are in public do you have a safety plan for your family? The same way we made mistakes during our role playing in our basic academy, we can expect our family members to make mistakes the first time they need to perform in an emergency. We can drastically improve their performance by roleplaying with our children and significant others. Have a code word or phrase set up with your family to get their attention and tell them there is an emergency and what to do.

Here is an example you may want to use:

“Code red, get away” When you tell them this, they should immediately look what you are wearing , and leave the location quietly without asking questions. When they are at a safe distance they call the local police and give your location, tell them you are an armed off duty-officer, describe you and tell dispatch you need help.

“Code red, get behind me” You have evaluated that based on the threat and location, the safest location they can get to is behind you. When you tell them this, they should immediately get behind you without asking questions.

“Code red, get away drill” When you tell them this, they should immediately look what you are wearing , and leave the location quietly without asking questions. When they are at a safe distance they call you and you act as the dispatcher seeing if they can relate the proper information.

Similarly have you discussed with your family what to do if you are recognized? If someone approaches you and your family and says, “You remember me Officer Jones?” Out families should be prepared to act just as if we had said “Code Red Get Away.”

This training was developed based on hundreds of case studies, interviews with surviving officers and witnesses and over 90 years of law enforcement experience. If you would like additional information about training please contact us anytime.

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