



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS



582.01

CONDUCTING WELFARE CHECKS

03-05-2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for responding to welfare check requests and entering residences to ensure the mental and physical well-being of persons in our community. All welfare check requests conducted pursuant to this order shall be done so in compliance with established Fourth Amendment and search and seizure provisions.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) that officers responding to a person's request for a welfare check of another person do so in a manner that prioritizes the safety of all persons while respecting the right to privacy.

PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL

1. A welfare check (also known as a wellness check) is a request for officers to locate a person, evaluate their mental and physical well-being, and to update the welfare check requestor of the condition of another person.
2. Each welfare check request will have unique sets of circumstances. Examples of welfare check requests include, but are not limited to:
 - a. An elderly or vulnerable person living alone who has not been heard from in some time.
 - b. A person who has not reported to work or other activity for several days and cannot be contacted.
 - c. An incomplete call for police in which the circumstances indicate a person may be in physical danger in the residence.
 - d. Suspected child abuse.
 - e. A person who is the victim of a crime (e.g., domestic, or physical violence).
3. When the welfare check request is made for a person experiencing a mental health crisis, officers shall act in accordance with General Order 522.01 (Handling Mentally Ill Persons).

B. OFFICER RESPONSE

1. Officers handling welfare checks shall:
 - a. Make reasonable attempts to locate and check the welfare of the person.
 - b. Conduct due diligence to determine the status of a person who is the subject of a welfare check request.
 - (1) Due diligence includes, but is not limited to:
 - (a) Record checks of the person and any associated locations.
 - (b) Checks of the exterior of any associated structures or residences for indications that the person may be inside and in distress or in need of help.
 - (c) A neighborhood canvass for information of the potential whereabouts of the person or information that they may be in danger or need help.
 - (d) Contacting the call requestor for additional details.
 - (e) Attempting to call the person at all associated telephone numbers.
 - (f) Contacting family members, friends, and associates of the person.
 - c. Notify the district sergeant of the welfare check location if officers:
 - (1) Have reason to believe that a welfare check was initiated to harass, annoy, disturb, or threaten another person.
 - (2) Are unable to ascertain the status of a person requested to be checked.



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2. A general welfare check request of a person shall not serve as a Fourth Amendment exception for entry into a structure or residence of which a person has an expectation of privacy.
3. If exigent circumstances exist to complete a warrantless entry into a structure or residence for the purposes of completing a welfare check of a person, officers shall:
 - a. When feasible, notify the district sergeant of the circumstances.
 - b. If medical treatment is necessary, request the response of the fire department.
 - c. When feasible and safe, consider utilizing less-destructive breaching tools or tactics (e.g., lock picks, keys, unlocked door or window).
 - d. If time permits, ensure at least two officers are on scene before making entry.
 - e. Provide knock and notice announcements prior to entry.
 - f. Make continuous and loud verbal announcements identifying themselves as police officers during the search.
 - g. Only search a structure or residence within the scope of conducting a welfare check (e.g., searching for the person who is the subject of the welfare check) and not for contraband or evidence of a crime.
 - h. Upon completion of the search, ensure the structure or residence is properly secured in accordance with General Order 527.05 (Securing Open/Damaged Structures).
4. If evidence of a crime (e.g., narcotics, illegal weapons, etc.) is observed during a warrantless search of a structure or residence, officers shall assess the lawful authority to conduct further searches and seizures. Officers should consider:
 - a. Obtaining valid consent from a person with lawful standing to provide consent.
 - b. Utilizing applicable probation or parole search conditions.
 - c. Seeking a search warrant.
5. If the person who is the subject of the welfare check is located, officers shall:
 - a. Evaluate the need for law enforcement or medical interventions and take appropriate action.
 - b. Provide the district sergeant with an update.
 - c. Ask the subject if a disposition of the call can be given to the welfare check requestor.
 - (1) If the subject declines for a disposition to be given to the welfare check requestor, then absent a lawful right to know, an officer or the communications center shall only advise the welfare check requestor that officers made contact and the subject checked okay.

C. DOCUMENTATION

1. Officers shall document welfare checks in the following manner:
 - a. Computer-aided dispatch call log remarks: No entry into a structure or residence and there was a lack of indicators requiring additional investigation.
 - b. General offense or incident report: Additional investigation is necessary or entry into a structure or residence was made.
 - c. Risk Management portal: In addition to a general offense or incident report, officers shall document any damage in accordance with GO 527.05.