

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

NOTICE

July 8, 2005

3.3.1

TO: All Department Employees

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Since 1994, the Department has worked in partnership with the residential and business communities, non-profit agencies, and social service organizations of the City to assist in the fight against Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C, by establishing the Syringe Exchange Program.

In 2002-03, the City-sponsored Syringe Exchange Program removed nearly one million used, potentially lethal, syringes from the streets of Los Angeles. A study conducted by the United States Surgeon General showed that syringe exchange programs are an effective public health intervention tactic that reduces the transmission of AIDS, HIV and Hepatitis C, and that they do not encourage the use of illegal drugs. In addition, several studies have concluded there is little evidence to support an increase in drug-related crime as a result of syringe exchange programs.

The Mayor has declared a Local Public Health Emergency regarding the AIDS/HIV epidemic and endorsed the establishment of a clean syringe exchange program in the City. This Notice reaffirms the Department's commitment to reduce the spread of AIDS, HIV and Hepatitis C, and reminds all Department personnel of the existing procedures regarding the Syringe Exchange Program in the City.

PROCEDURE:

- I. SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM – GENERAL PROVISIONS.** The Syringe Exchange Program in the City of Los Angeles has been operating for over a decade under the sanction of the City Council. The Syringe Exchange Program is designed to allow intravenous drug users to trade used syringes, which are a major source of HIV infection, for clean syringes. Participants in the City sponsored Syringe Exchange Program must be at least 18 years of age or older and must possess a valid syringe exchange card bearing their participant code number (see attachment 1). Syringe exchange sites are located throughout the City (see attachment 2 and 3) and are monitored by the City AIDS Coordinator's Office.
- II. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES.** Officers who encounter participants of the Syringe Exchange Program at a designated Syringe Exchange Program location shall generally adhere to the following guidelines:

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- * Do not investigate, arrest or detain, or seize property pursuant to a violation of state drug paraphernalia laws when such violations are an immediate result of participation in a City-sponsored Syringe Exchange Program;
- * Do not target or conduct observation post activity at Syringe Exchange Program locations for the sole purpose of identifying, detaining or arresting persons for narcotic-related offenses; and,
- * Officers who receive a call for service related to the distribution activities at a City-sponsored Syringe Exchange Program location shall immediately request a supervisor to respond to the scene. In addition, officers should attempt to mediate the situation consistent with the intent of the Mayor's declaration to the satisfaction of all involved parties.

III. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Supervisors shall monitor calls for service related to the Syringe Exchange Program and assist officers in mediating incidents that arise from complaints involving program locations. All incidents shall be documented on a Sergeant's Daily Report, Form 15.48.

IV. WATCH COMMANDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Area watch commanders shall log incidents involving the Syringe Exchange Program within their Area on the Watch Commander's Daily Report, Form 15.80. In addition, information regarding Syringe Exchange Program locations should be disseminated to all officers.

V. COMMANDING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES. Area commanding officers shall ensure that the actions of their personnel, as they relate to clean syringe exchange programs, are consistent with the intent of the Mayor's declaration.

This Notice is intended to inform Department personnel of the importance of the fight against AIDS, HIV and Hepatitis C, and to specify the Department's role in the successful implementation of a responsible Syringe Exchange Program. It is not intended to prevent officers from performing normal narcotics enforcement activities.

If you have any questions regarding the Syringe Exchange Program, please contact the City of Los Angeles AIDS Coordinator's Office, at (213) 485-6320. For reference, a list of City of Los Angeles Syringe Exchange Program sites and a copy of a valid Syringe Exchange Card are attached to this Notice.



WILLIAM J. BRATTON
Chief of Police

Attachments

DISTRIBUTION "D"