

Obtaining Air Support

439.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The use of a police helicopter can be invaluable in certain situations. This policy specifies potential situations where the use of a helicopter may be requested and the responsibilities for making a request.

439.2 REQUEST FOR HELICOPTER ASSISTANCE

If a supervisor or officer in charge of an incident determines that the use of a helicopter would be beneficial, a request to obtain helicopter assistance may be made.

439.2.1 REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM ANOTHER AGENCY

After consideration and approval of the request for a helicopter, the Shift Sergeant, or his/her designee, will call the California Highway Patrol. The Shift Sergeant on duty will apprise that agency of the specific details of the incident prompting the request. Supervisors should consider the potential fee charged by agencies for the use of the helicopter before making a request, however cost shall not override public safety concerns.

439.2.2 CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AID MAY BE REQUESTED

Police helicopters may be requested under any of the following conditions:

- (a) When the helicopter is activated under existing mutual aid agreements
- (b) Whenever the safety of law enforcement personnel is in jeopardy and the presence of the helicopters may reduce such hazard
- (c) When the use of the helicopters will aid in the capture of a suspected fleeing felon whose continued freedom represents an ongoing threat to the community
- (d) When a helicopter is needed to locate a person who has strayed or is lost and whose continued absence constitutes a serious health or safety hazard
- (e) Vehicle pursuits

While it is recognized that the availability of helicopter support will generally provide valuable assistance to ground personnel, the presence of a helicopter will rarely replace the need for officers on the ground.