

APPENDIX A
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Operations Order Report

Op Order Name: SDC OPERATION STONEGARDEN (OPSG) FY2024
Op Order Number: 24-SDCSDC-09-002
Op Dates: From: 09/01/2024 To: 08/31/2027 (POP)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Law enforcement partnerships between federal, state, and local entities are critical to improving operational control of the border. Grant funding in the amount of \$7,451,701 via Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) will be utilized by a total of 19 partner law enforcement agencies from local units of government within San Diego County, including the Sycuan Tribal Police Department, Sheriff's Departments from San Diego, Orange, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and San Mateo Counties, as well as California State Agencies to target border-related crime in the U.S./Mexico Border area and the California coastline. The San Diego County Sheriff's Office (SDSO) will be the OPSG Grant Administrator. The point-of contact (POC) will be Lieutenant Chris Katra. The USBP San Diego Sector Chief Patrol Agent will have operational oversight. The POC will be Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Anna Sofchek.

The USBP San Diego Sector Chief Patrol Agent (CPA), in coordination/collaboration with OPSG stakeholders, will determine which areas will be the focus of operations. Security threats and operational hours/activities will be determined jointly between the San Diego Sector unified command staff and the OPSG Integrated Planning Team (IPT). Maritime-specific operations will be coordinated jointly with the San Diego Regional Coordinating Mechanism (ReCoM), Los Angeles/Long Beach ReCoM, Central California Maritime Agency Coordination Group (CenCal MAC), and the San Francisco ReCoM.

Utilizing an all-threats approach in collaboration with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)-U.S. Border Patrol (USBP), state and local law enforcement agencies will exercise their

unique jurisdictional capabilities in order to collaboratively address border security issues. Historically, San Diego County has been a highly favored operational area for crime and drug smuggling organizations. The close proximity of Tijuana, Mexico to San Diego, California, population density, significant coastline, and extensive transportation networks leading to the interior immediately north of the border make San Diego a consistently lucrative target. Now, as the maritime smuggling threat increases, these organizations are looking for smuggling opportunities beyond San Diego County as demonstrated by Pangas being discovered more than 400 miles north in San Mateo County. Border-related crime represents an all-threat environment in that the primary criminal activity (drug/human smuggling) often results in cross-border criminal organizations and individuals undertaking secondary and frequently, tertiary criminal activities that involve a wider range of crimes (kidnappings, assaults, murders, money laundering, cross-border weapons trafficking, etc.). These criminal activities, when undertaken in the U.S., constitute a threat to domestic security, subsequently triggering involvement by state and local law enforcement.

I. SITUATION

A. General Situation:

San Diego County (SDC) includes approximately 60 miles of international land border, and the responsibility of the San Diego Sector includes the 931 miles of coastal border of the State of California, including beaches and bays. SDC has an effective level of security that is commensurate with known and identified risks associated with criminal organizations. The incidence of border violence associated with competing drug cartels in the Tijuana/Tecate areas has continued and still has great potential to spread into the United States. Frequent assaults against Border Patrol Agents are a common diversionary tactic utilized by smuggling organizations to further their criminal activity. During a particularly volatile situation on July 23, 2009, Border Patrol Agent Robert Rosas was murdered in close proximity to the border fence while responding to an incursion in the Campo Station area of responsibility (AOR). As security of the border is established and/or expanded within key target zones, criminal organizations resort to increasingly elaborate smuggling methods such as sophisticated cross-border tunnels, watercraft in the maritime environment, and ultra-light aircraft. U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) San Diego Sector Operation Division will address specific threats posed by such organizations and aggressively integrate OPSG assets to reduce violent crime along the border, increase border security, and improve the quality of life within affected communities throughout the San Diego Sector operational AOR.

As the maritime threat continues to increase in San Diego Sector's AOR, it has been necessary to provide additional funding and support along the coast to address emerging maritime Panga smuggling events approximately 489 miles north in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties.

Since its inception, the intent of OPSG has been to enhance law enforcement preparedness and operational readiness along the nation's borders. The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act 2010 (PL 111-83), via the

Homeland Security Grant Program, allocated \$81 million in FY 2024 OPSG grant funds for use by local units of government to increase coordination and enforcement capabilities in support of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) goals including those outlined in the Border Patrol National Strategy. For this grant year, the San Diego Sector has been awarded \$7,451,701 in FY 2024 OPSG Homeland Security Grant funds.

B. Terrain/Weather:

Terrain features within the San Diego Sector include beaches, estuaries, coastal plains, steep canyons and ravines, high desert, and mountains over six thousand feet in elevation. There are numerous environmentally sensitive and protected areas. Dense, low-lying brush and scrub trees cover much of the rural terrain throughout.

San Diego County's western corridor is one of the most densely populated areas in the United States. The corridor includes the cities of San Diego, Imperial Beach, Chula Vista, Coronado, Encinitas, Carlsbad, and Oceanside. The County's central corridor is comprised primarily of a blend of sparsely populated remote and rural wilderness areas. The eastern corridor consists of rural mountain and ranching enclaves with populations ranging from a few hundred up to several thousand.

Orange County through San Mateo County represents a rugged coastline along with varying weather. Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties include the Channel Islands. These islands are remote and desolate and represent an area of great concern for the San Diego Sector.

California State Parks and the California Highway Patrol are working together in remote areas from Ventura to San Mateo with the Sheriff's Offices in each of those counties as the Maritime threat continues to move north along the California Coast.

Weather conditions vary greatly throughout the San Diego Sector. The western corridor generally maintains year-round mild temperatures that average 50 to 80 degrees. The central and eastern corridors can experience extremes in temperatures ranging from subfreezing to well over 100 degrees. Eastern portions of the County can experience occasional snowfall and high winds. In addition, the western portion of the San Diego Sector experiences frequent coastal eddies (a combination of low clouds and fog), which extend several miles inland.

Wildfires are a very real and persistent threat throughout the San Diego Sector. The fire season extends from May through November. Historically, wildfires have resulted in the devastating loss of life and property.

The combination of climatic extremes, rugged terrain, dense urban corridors, and protected environmental areas presents a complex challenge to conducting daily operations. As such, enforcement entities operating within the counties utilize considerable ingenuity and flexibility in order to achieve their missions.

C. Criminal Element:

Drug smuggling organizations continue to pose significant threats throughout the area. These organizations have become increasingly sophisticated and use counter surveillance, diversionary tactics, night vision devices, and secure communications while conducting operations. Human trafficking, trans-border kidnappings, extortion, murder, and intimidation are common results of cartel competition for lucrative territory. Criminal debriefings, examination of pocket trash, and officer observations indicate substantial intelligence gathering efforts against law enforcement operations by area criminal organizations.

Smugglers frequently utilize dangerous tactics in order to further their cargo into the United States. Among these are failures to yield when vehicle or checkpoint stops are initiated, abandonment of the smuggling vehicle by the driver while it is still in motion, wrong way driving on freeways north through the Mexican Port of Entry into the southbound lanes of Interstate 5, and the overloading of boats with human cargo. The abandonment of individuals or entire groups by their guides in remote, inhospitable environments is not uncommon and has resulted in a significant number of deaths. Smuggling organizations using these, and other tactics, have been historically responsible for several assaults on Border Patrol Agents and local law enforcement officers.

D. Friendly Forces:

San Diego County Sheriff's Office
San Diego Harbor Police
Carlsbad Police Department
Chula Vista Police Department
Escondido Police Department
La Mesa Police Department
El Cajon Police Department
Oceanside Police Department
Sycuan Tribal Police Department
Ventura County Sheriff's Office
Orange County Sheriff's Department
Monterey County Sheriff's Office
Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office
San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office
San Mateo County Sheriff's Office
California Highway Patrol
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Department of Parks and Recreation
University of California San Diego Police Department