



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 25, 2013

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Pima County Sheriff's Department Response Times**

Minutes matter when residents need help, and the Pima County Sheriff's Department continues to provide the community with timely responses to requests for service despite geographic challenges and budgetary constraints.

On average, deputies respond to a scene in less than five minutes for 90 percent of Priority 1 calls, which are calls in which an immediate response will crucially affect the outcome of an incident; whether it is a robbery or carjacking, an assault or fight in progress, a shooting or an urgent call to help a fellow officer. This statistic is accurate for the metropolitan area of Pima County.

In Calendar Year 2012, the Sheriff's Department received more than 132,000 calls for service – an average of about 360 calls every day.

The Sheriff relies heavily on technology and concise policies regarding call management to effectively handle the call load, even though the Department's ratio of 1.45 officers per 1,000 citizens is one of the lowest in the state and well below the national sheriff's average of 2.7 per 1,000 citizens. Compounding this low staffing ratio, Pima County is one of the largest counties in the nation, covering more than 9,000 square miles and serving more than 350,000 residents in the unincorporated area.

To allow deputies to assist callers most efficiently, calls are prioritized generally on a scale of 1 to 5 based on the nature of the call, with Priority 1 requiring immediate response. Priority 4 calls are not impacted by a longer response, and Priority 5 calls are typically handled over the telephone.

Response times by priority are shown in minutes/seconds in the table below.

Sheriff's Department Response Times.*

Priority Level	Response Time
1	4:59
2	7:34
3	11:13
4	13:52

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**Response times for the top 90 percent of calls in the Pima County metropolitan area.*

Given wide variations in population density, geographic size and reporting criteria – such as what constitutes a Priority 1 call or whether the clock begins when the telephone is answered or when a call is assigned – there is no official average emergency response time standard in the United States. Nevertheless, the Sheriff's Department compares favorably to other jurisdictions in the region.

Additionally, unlike other jurisdictions, the Department has resisted any move to require online or mail-in reporting. Regardless of the level of priority, the Pima County Sheriff's Department responds to 100 percent of calls for service in which an in-person deputy response is requested.

Further, check systems are in place to ensure calls are followed up in a timely manner. For example, if a deputy is not available for a Priority 1 call, a sergeant is notified immediately. If a low-priority call is held more than 20 minutes, a sergeant is notified, and the reportee typically is called back to be informed of the delay and is given information about when a response might be expected. If the call waits for an hour or more, the District Commander or Force Commander, as well as the Communications Commander, are notified, regardless of the time of day or night.

For the convenience of the public, minor calls such as those related to theft, vandalism and fraud under \$5,000 may be completed online by computer or smartphone at www.pimasheriff.org. Deputies who are recovering from injuries and are not yet cleared for regular duty are assigned to the Sheriff's reporting center to assist with calls that do not require an in-person response.

The Sheriff's Department remains committed to providing the most efficient and effective service possible to our community, using every management and technological tool available to do so.

CHH/mjk

c: The Honorable Clarence Dupnik, Pima County Sheriff