



As we enter the last third of 2017, we continue to see crime increase in the City of Los Angeles and resources stretched far too thin throughout our Department. As your League continues to push the Department to place more resources in operations and to put officer safety first, I want to share information from the 2017 mid-year report of the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund on Line-of-Duty Deaths.

There were **65 line-of-duty deaths** of federal, state and local law enforcement officers in the first six months of 2017. That is up 30 percent over the same time period last year. The leading cause of death was traffic-related fatalities involving 26 officers, up 24 percent over the same time period last year. Ten of these incidents involved single-vehicle traffic collisions, up 233 percent over last year. The second-leading cause of duty-related deaths were firearms-related fatalities involving 23 officers. That is a 10 percent increase over the same period in 2016. The remaining 16 duty-related deaths involved six job-related ailments, including cardiac events, and three from 9/11-related illnesses; two officers were beaten to death; two officers died in boating incidents; one officer was stabbed; one officer drowned; and one was poisoned.

Each of these tragic losses was a brother or sister officer. A partner. A friend. A co-worker. Our blue family. Each one leaves behind loved ones both blood and blue whose lives are forever changed by their loss. Hearts that will never be healed. Children who will grow up without their father or mother.

We all took the oath. We all knew the risks. However, many of those risks can be mitigated. Wear your body armor. If it doesn't fit, get one that does. Ensure that your partners wear their vest. It is not only Department policy; vests save lives. Wear your seat belts and avoid overdriving. You cannot assist your brother and sister officers if you do not arrive safely. Discuss driving behaviors with your partner. Do not allow your partner to take unnecessary risks. Help each other avoid tunnel vision.

We have all heard these things repeatedly throughout our careers, whether short or long; however, officers still go into the field without their vests. They still do not buckle up. They still overdrive or do not speak up when their partners overdrive.

Take care of yourself physically and mentally. Our Department loses officers every year to job-related stress, illnesses and diseases. This past year has been especially hard as we have lost several officers to sudden cardiac-related deaths. This job takes a huge toll on our physical bodies and our mental health. Make physical fitness a part of your regular routine. Schedule it in. Find something you like to do—run, walk, bicycle, CrossFit, hike, weightlift, participate in a team sport or exercise class—anything that will get you moving. Find a partner, friend or family member to work out with and hold each other accountable. Encourage your sedentary partners to join you and make it fun. Take advantage of our medical insurance and be sure to get your annual exams and tests to keep yourself healthy and aware of any issues. Early detection of illnesses is key! We are better at work and at home when we take care of ourselves first. Make you a priority.

Our Department has been devastated every year by officer suicides. Again, this past year has been especially hard as we have lost several LAPD officers to suicide. Don't be afraid to ask for help when times are rough. There are resources available to us through Peer Counseling, Behavioral Sciences, Managed Health Network, insurance services, our partners and your League Directors. Directors are on call and available to you 24/7 through RACR Division. You may always call me directly at (818) 416-6495.

Take care of each other. Keep an eye on the partner who may be going through a difficult situation. If you or someone you know is feeling helpless, please reach out. Call a friend or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text 741-741 for free 24/7 support from a trained counselor. Although the suicide statistics among law enforcement personnel are not part of the line-of-duty death data, it continues affect our blue family—each one a tragic loss to all of us.

As always, you may reach me at (818) 416-6495 or at LouTurriaga@lappl.org. Stay safe!