



County of Los Angeles

March 4, 2025

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County Counsel

Board of Supervisors

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Supervisor, Fifth District

TO: EDWARD YEN
Executive Officer
Board of Supervisors

FROM: TIMOTHY J. KRAL 
Acting Assistant County Counsel
Justice and Safety Division

RE: **Item for the Board of Supervisors' Agenda
County Contract Cities Liability Trust Fund
Claims Board Recommendation
Sanford, Timothy, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al.
Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 20STCV08006**



Attached is the Agenda entry for the Los Angeles County Contract Cities Liability Trust Fund Claims Board's recommendation in the above-referenced matter. Also attached is the Case Summary and the Summary Corrective Action Plan for the case.

It is requested that this recommendation, the Case Summary, and the Summary Corrective Action Plan be placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda.

TJK:sr

Attachment

Board Agenda

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Settlement for Matter Entitled Sanford, Timothy, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al. Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 20STCV08006.

Los Angeles County Contract Cities Liability Trust Fund Claims Board's recommendation: Authorized Settlement of the matter entitled **Sanford, Timothy, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al. Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 20STCV08006** in the amount of \$700,000 and instruct the Auditor-Controller to draw a warrant to implement this settlement from the Sheriff's Department Contract Cities Trust Fund's budget.

This lawsuit concerns allegations of an automobile accident involving a Sheriff's Deputy.

CASE SUMMARY

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATION

CASE NAME	Timothy Sanford, et al. v. County of Los Angeles, et al.
CASE NUMBER	20STCV08006
COURT	Los Angeles Superior Court
DATE FILED	February 26, 2020
COUNTY DEPARTMENT	Sheriff's Department
PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AMOUNT	\$ 700,000
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF	John Rofael of Downtown LA Law Group for Plaintiffs Timothy Sanford and Katherine Ortega; Steven Mazza of Carpenter & Zuckerman for Plaintiffs Randy and Noemi Martell
COUNTY COUNSEL ATTORNEY	Michael J. Gordon Senior Deputy County Counsel
NATURE OF CASE	<p>On April 20, 2019, a vehicle driven by Plaintiff Timothy Sanford in which Plaintiff Katherine Ortega was a passenger collided with a Sheriff's Department patrol car in the intersection of Sierra Highway and Avenue K in the City of Lancaster. The initial collision caused the the Sheriff's Department patrol car to spin and colide with Plaintiffs' Randy and Noemi Martell's car. Plaintiffs allege the collisions caused injuries for which they seek compensation.</p> <p>Given the risk and uncertainties of litigation, a full and final settlement of the case in the amount of \$700,000 is warranted.</p>
PAID ATTORNEY FEES, TO DATE	\$ 126,092
PAID COSTS, TO DATE	\$ 12,777



Summary Corrective Action Plan

The intent of this form is to assist departments in writing a corrective action plan summary for attachment to the settlement documents developed for the Board of Supervisors and/or the County of Los Angeles Claims Board. The summary should be a specific overview of the claims/lawsuits' identified root causes and corrective actions (status, time frame, and responsible party). This summary does not replace the Corrective Action Plan form. If there is a question related to confidentiality, please consult County Counsel.

Date of incident/event:	April 20, at approximately 2:57 p.m.
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	<p>Summary Corrective Action Plan 2024-217</p> <p>Details in this document summarize the incident. The information provided is a culmination of various sources to provide an abstract of the incident.</p> <p>Multiple investigative reports indicate on Saturday, April 20, 2019, at approximately 2:57 p.m., an on-duty Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Deputy Sheriff was responding to an emergency call for service with overhead lights and sirens activated when a collision occurred.</p> <p>Deputy One was driving a marked patrol vehicle southbound on the highway in the number one lane of travel. Deputy One approached the intersection, and the electronic signal for southbound traffic was a solid red light.</p> <p>As Deputy One entered the intersection, he slowed his patrol vehicle to approximately six miles per hour to clear east and westbound lanes of travel. The Deputy Sheriff accelerated to approximately 29 miles per hour as he traversed the remainder of the intersection. Upon reaching the number three lane, the Deputy Sheriff was struck by Plaintiff One's vehicle, which was traveling eastbound at approximately 50 miles per hour.</p> <p>The impact of the collision caused Deputy One's patrol vehicle to spin out of control, subsequently colliding with two vehicles stopped at the red light in the northbound lane on Sierra Highway.</p> <p>Deputy One's patrol vehicle, as well as the vehicle occupied by Plaintiffs One and Two, sustained major damage.</p> <p>Plaintiffs Three and Four occupied one of the vehicles the Deputy subsequently crashed into. That vehicle sustained moderate damage.</p> <p>The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) responded to the location to treat Deputy One and the involved parties. The Plaintiffs declined medical treatment at the scene. Deputy One was transported to the hospital for further medical treatment.</p> <p>A station traffic unit responded to the collision site and conducted a traffic collision investigation. The investigation concluded Deputy One caused the traffic collision by traveling at an unsafe speed upon a highway, in violation of California Vehicle Code Section 22350.</p>

	<p>A secondary causal factor was, Plaintiff One's failure to yield to an emergency vehicle with lights and sirens activated in violation of California Vehicle Code Section – 21806(a)(1).</p> <p>A Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department sergeant was notified of the traffic collision and responded to the location. The sergeant authored a Supervisor's Report of Incident or Damage to County Vehicle.</p> <p>Deputy One's Statement is based on the Supervisor's Report of Incident or Damage to County Vehicle:</p> <p>Deputy One stated he was responding Code-3 (lights and sirens) to an emergency call for service as he traveled southbound on the highway in the number one lane. Deputy One decelerated as he approached the intersection before traveling into northbound lanes. He cleared eastbound lanes of travel and began to clear westbound lanes of travel when Party Two's vehicle collided with the rear passenger side of his patrol vehicle</p>
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1. Briefly describe the **root cause(s)** of the claim/lawsuit:

A **Department** root cause in this incident was the Deputy sheriff traveling at an unsafe speed upon the highway in violation of California Vehicle Code Section 22350.

A **Department** root cause in this incident was Deputy One's failure to clear the intersection lane-by-lane.

A **non-Contributing** root cause in this incident was Deputy One's failure to utilize the patrol vehicle's factory-installed seatbelt.

A non-**Department** root cause in this incident was Plaintiff One failed to yield to an emergency vehicle with lights and sirens activated in violation of California Vehicle Code Section 21806(a).

2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

Traffic Collision Investigation

This incident was thoroughly investigated by a Lancaster Sheriff's Station traffic unit, who concluded the Deputy Sheriff caused the collision by traveling at an unsafe speed upon a highway in violation of California Vehicle Code section 22350.

Administrative Investigation

The incident was investigated by a representative from Lancaster Sheriff's Station to determine if any administrative misconduct occurred stemming from the traffic collision. The results of the investigation were presented for Department executive adjudication.

Executive evaluation found some of the Deputy Sheriff's actions were in violation of Department policy and appropriate administrative action was taken.

The employee involved in this incident received training surrounding the circumstances concerning this incident.

Traffic Collision Assessment and Review

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Station conducted a review and assessment of their traffic collisions for the calendar year 2019 through 2023. The audit revealed the following:

- 112 preventable collisions occurred during the past five years.
- 66 nonpreventable collisions occurred during the evaluated five years.

To advocate for employee safety and reduce the Department's liability exposure, Lancaster Station continually schedules personnel to attend the Department's Sheriff Traffic Accident Reduction (S.T.A.R.) driving program and behind-the-wheel EVOC refresher training. The S.T.A.R. program focuses on low-speed parking and starting maneuvers, and EVOC replicates Code-3 and other dangerous driving situations.

Sheriff Department Announcement – Department-Wide Re-brief

The purpose of this re-brief is to remind Department personnel that the safety of Department members and the public is paramount when engaged in routine driving and Code-3 responses.

It is essential to maintain heightened officer safety, common sense, and sound tactics to reduce collision-related injuries, deaths, and financial liability to the Department.

Department-Wide Broadcast Announcements--Sheriff's Communication Center (SCC)

In hopes of mitigating the Department's traffic collisions, Risk Management has partnered with SCC to create Department-Wide announcements.

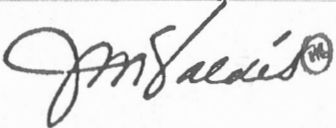
County of Los Angeles
Summary Corrective Action Plan

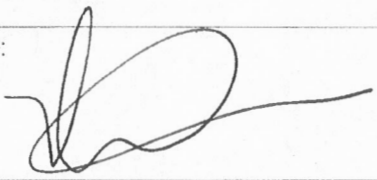
3. Are the corrective actions addressing Department-wide system issues?


☐ Yes – The corrective actions address Department-wide system issues.

☒ No – The corrective actions are only applicable to the affected parties.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Name: (Risk Management Coordinator) Julia Vales, A/ Captain Risk Management Bureau	
Signature: 	Date: 11/30/24

Name: (Department Head) Myron Johnson, Assistant Sheriff Patrol Operations	
Signature: 	Date: 11/26/24

Chief Executive Office Risk Management Inspector General USE ONLY	
Are the corrective actions applicable to other departments within the County?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the corrective actions potentially have County-wide applicability.	
<input type="checkbox"/> No, the corrective actions are applicable only to this Department.	
Name: Betty Karmirlian (Risk Management Inspector General)	
Signature: 	Date: 11/27/2024