

Participating Agencies

- Ventura County Sheriff's Office
- Ventura County District Attorney's Office
- Ventura County Probation Agency
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- California Highway Patrol
- California State University Channel Islands Police Department
- Oxnard Police Department
- Port Hueneme Police Department
- Santa Paula Police Department
- Simi Valley Police Department
- Ventura County Community College Police Department
- Ventura Police Department

VC FOCUS Command Structure-

- A. Executive Committee- The Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (VCLECC) is comprised of the Ventura County Sheriff, Chiefs of Police from each law enforcement agency in Ventura County, and the District Attorney. VCLECC will act as the VC FOCUS Executive Committee. The Special Services Assistant Sheriff will report information on VC FOCUS to the Sheriff for reporting to VCLECC.
- B. Management- The Ventura Sheriff's Narcotics Captain will manage VC FOCUS and will maintain direct communication with the management of agency participants. The Narcotics Captain will provide general oversight, ensure adherence to policy, and ensure best practices are being followed.
- C. Supervision- Each of the two teams within VC FOCUS will be supervised by a Sergeant from the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. These sergeants will supervise criminal investigations, ensure operational safety, maintain statistics, and prepare monthly reports.

Any participating agency can assign a sergeant, or equivalent supervisory level participant, to VC FOCUS. These supervisors will share in the supervisory responsibility under the management of the Sheriff's Narcotics Captain.

- D. Investigators- Each participating agency may assign qualified investigators/detectives to VC FOCUS for a minimum of one year. The investigators shall work under the immediate supervision of the VC FOCUS sergeants. While assigned to VC FOCUS, investigators shall remain subject to the policies, procedures, and directives of their employing agencies.

Investigators/Detectives may possess undercover documents supporting covert identities used to enhance operations and investigations. The procurement, utilization, and control of these documents shall be the responsibility of the investigator's employing agency.

Investigators who do not meet acceptable standards of performance or who refuse to comply with policies and procedures may be removed from VC FOCUS by the Narcotics Captain. The Narcotics Captain shall discuss the issue with the investigator's employing agency.

If the employing agency does not agree with the action, the contested issue shall be forwarded to the collective department heads for final resolution. Resolution of operational problems at the lowest level is desirable and is in the best overall interest of the unit.

Funding

VC FOCUS was created as a task force model to combat the Fentanyl epidemic in a collaborative manner and reduce overdoses county wide. Each participating agency is responsible for the salary, benefits, overtime, vehicle, equipment, and other costs related to their assigned investigator(s). The County of Ventura does not have any funding in place or obligation to reimburse any agency participating in VC FOCUS. In the event that additional or supplemental funding is made available, the Narcotics Captain will manage the grant or funding in the best interest of VC FOCUS. The Executive Committee will make decisions based on any future grants or funding that is made available to VC FOCUS.

Vehicles, Equipment, and Facilities

Each participating agency shall provide its members with an unmarked vehicle for use during this assignment. This vehicle shall be equipped with a police radio and capable of being operated as an emergency vehicle. The participating agency will be responsible for insurance, registration, fuel, and maintenance costs for the vehicle.

Each agency shall provide its members with the necessary safety equipment required to make them operational effective to include, entry vest, ballistic helmet, less lethal force options, and any tactical equipment approved and/ or issued by the agency.

Additional equipment for VC FOCUS may be purchased by the Ventura Sheriff's Office to enable investigators to fulfill the mission safely. Any equipment purchased or issued by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office will remain property of VCSO and must be surrendered upon agency or member reassignment.

Office space, including basic office supplies, desktop computer, telephone service will be provided by VCSO. Costs of additional equipment such as laptop computers and cellular telephones shall be the responsibility of each participating agency.

Policy

Each agency member shall abide by their own department policy while working as part of VC FOCUS. Investigations, including covert operations, confidential informants, search warrants, and tactical operations will adhere to the Sheriff's Investigation Manual. Each participating member will be provided access to this manual.

Civilians' complaints, use of force investigations, and/or internal affairs matters involving VC FOCUS personnel shall be investigated by the involved employee's parent agency, VC FOCUS personnel shall cooperate with all personnel investigations. Furthermore, the Narcotics Captain

shall be kept informed of the status of any investigation involving a VC FOCUS member. Nothing in this paragraph is meant to limit agency personnel from investigating criminal activities of government employees.

Training

Personnel assigned to VC FOCUS shall abide by the training plan from their assigned agency to include annual updates as required by P.O.S.T or state mandate. All VC FOCUS investigators will be required to attend a basic narcotics course, or equivalent for Federal agencies, Ventura Sheriff Confidential Informant Management Training, and surveillance training.

Sergeants assigned to VC FOCUS will evaluate each assigned investigators' experience and training to determine capabilities. Newer investigators will be assigned to a Detective Training Officer and receive narcotics detective training. If required, the length and type of detective training will be evaluated by VC FOCUS Sergeants. All investigators will participate in monthly Narcotics Bureau training to include officer safety, building entry, tactical movement, officer rescue, case law, and narcotics related training.

It is the intention of VC FOCUS management to participate in regional, state, or national training conferences to provide investigators with the most current information on trends and enforcement efforts. The Narcotics Captain will coordinate training conferences with the managers from VC FOCUS participating agencies.

Use of Buy Funds

Buy funds for operations will be provided by VCSO. The Narcotics Captain issues funds to each sergeant and bi-annually audits the expenditures. Records, receipts, and ledgers are maintained by the Narcotics Captain for a term as prescribed in the Sheriff's Policy Manual and are kept confidential.

Deconfliction

It is both the policy and practice of the Sheriff's Office to utilize Western States Information Network ("WSIN") for investigative deconfliction. Each member of VC FOCUS will be given access to WSIN and be required to store investigative targets, informants, and investigative operations.

Media Releases

All media releases and statements will be written by case agents for review and approval by FOCUS Team Sergeants. Once approved, the Narcotics Captain will review the media release and send it to each agency for review at least two (2) hours before being released to the media. Media Releases will follow VCSO protocol for distribution and follow up.

Media releases will be published on a VC FOCUS letterhead that incorporates each participating agency insignia and include language about VC FOCUS and agency participation.

Press conferences on VC FOCUS cases will be planned by the Narcotics Captain. Each agency will be afforded the opportunity to participate. The Executive Committee will determine the lead presenter and each agency's level of participation in the press conference. The Executive Committee will have final authority to plan and coordinate press conferences.

VC FOCUS participants coordinate regular public education releases via social media with department representatives or PIOs.

Asset Forfeiture

California State Distributions from Forfeiture Actions and Seizure of Assets

- A. VC FOCUS shall seek to identify the assets of targets for forfeiture and remove the profits from crime; the use of both civil and criminal forfeiture statutes will be used in every instance. Depending on the investigation, assets may be seized per California Health and Safety Code section 11470(a)-(g) or per United States Federal Equitable Sharing laws.
- B. It is agreed that assets returned for distribution pursuant to Health and Safety Code 11489 will be shared based on the participating agencies' respective contributions to VC FOCUS. The federal agencies are excluded from asset sharing by California law. The following formula, determined by mutual consent and California Health and Safety section 11489, will be used for California State 11470(a)-(g) seizures:
 - a. All distribution of asset forfeiture funds will be made after the deduction of administrative costs that are described in Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(1).
 - b. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(2), the remaining forfeited monies will be disbursed as follows:
 - i. Sixty-five percent (65%) to the state, local, or state local law enforcement entities that participated in the seizures distributed to reflect the proportionate contribution to each agency. Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(2)(A). After 15% of these funds are deposited in "a special fund" as outlined in Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(2)(A)(i), the remainder of the sixty-five percent (65%) of the return distribution will be divided and returned to VC FOCUS member agencies. The percentage distributed to each agency will be based on that agency's level of operational participation and will be determined as a percentage of sworn personnel assigned to VC FOCUS, to include the asset forfeiture investigator(s), at the time such assets were seized.
 - ii. Ten percent (10%) to the prosecutorial agency which processes the forfeiture action. Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(2)(B).
 - iii. Twenty-four percent (24%) to the General Fund. Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, the moneys are hereby continuously appropriated to the General Fund. Commencing January 1, 1995, all moneys deposited in the General Fund pursuant to this subparagraph, in an amount not to exceed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000), shall be made available for school safety and security, upon appropriation by the Legislature, and shall be disbursed pursuant to Senate Bill 1255 of the 1993-94 Regular Session, as enacted. Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(2)(C).
 - iv. One percent (1%) to the Environmental Enforcement and Training Account established in Section 14303 of the Penal Code Health and Safety Code section 11489(b)(2)(D).

Federal Distributions from Forfeiture Actions and Seizure of Assets

- A. Regarding assets seized per the United States Federal Equitable Sharing laws, it is agreed that assets seized and returned for distribution will be shared based on the participating agencies' respective contribution to VC FOCUS, as determined by the Federal case agent assigned to the federal forfeiture, and not in the manner described in the "California State Distributions from Forfeiture Actions and Seizure of Assets" section hereinabove. Per federal mandate, a member from each agency participating in VC FOCUS must individually submit a United States Department of Justice Equitable Sharing Request

Form (DAG-71), or a United States Treasury TD F 92-22.46 form under its own NCIC code.

- B. Each participating agency will cooperate with the seizing Federal agency in the completion of Equitable Sharing Request Forms and complete tasks as required on the Asset Forfeiture Program website. Each federal participating agency will cooperate with the state and local participating agencies with VC FOCUS to ensure that each agency will be notified through the Federal Asset Forfeiture Portal of any opportunity to submit a DAG-71 or TD F92-22.46 form to request a share of forfeited assets and to ensure that the state and local participating agencies with VC FOCUS are given access to the Federal Asset Forfeiture Portal to submit such claim in a timely manner as required under federal law.

Liability & Indemnity

Each participating agency shall have full financial responsibility for their respective investigators, including vehicle traffic collisions, worker's compensation, and civil liability for acts or omissions of the other.

To the extent permitted by law, each individual VC FOCUS partner agency shall defend, indemnify, and save harmless all other VC FOCUS partner agencies and their appointees, officers, and employees from and against any and all claims, suits, or actions for "injury" (as defined by Government Code section 810.8) arising out of the individual VC FOCUS partner agency's performance under this agreement, but only in proportion to and to the extent that the claim, suit or action for injury is caused by the negligent or intentional acts or omissions of the individual VC FOCUS partner agency, or the individual VC FOCUS partner agency's appointees, officers, or employees, during the course and scope of this agreement.

Neither termination of this agreement nor completion of the acts to be performed under this agreement shall release any party from its obligation to indemnify as to any claims or cause of action asserted so long as the event(s) upon which such claim or cause of action is predicated shall have occurred after the effective date of this agreement and prior to the effective date of termination or completion.

Claims and Litigation Handling

Any claim against any participating agency that is the result of VC FOCUS operation shall be processed as follows in order to assure appropriate claims and litigation reporting and handling:

- a) Each participating agency shall be given immediate notice of any claim filed against VC FOCUS. Copies of said claim shall be immediately forwarded to the participating entity (Attention: Risk Manager).
- b) Each participating agency retains the right to investigate, adjust and settle their portion of any case independent of the remaining parties.
- c) Each participating agency shall retain separate defense counsel to represent each of them as each deems appropriate in its absolute discretion.

Statistics and Communication

The Narcotics Captain will maintain statistics for VC FOCUS according to the Ventura County Sheriff's Narcotics Bureau standards. VC FOCUS Sergeants will complete a monthly memorandum detailing the activities of the teams. The Narcotics Sergeant will review the statistics and memorandum by the tenth day of the following month and share with VC FOCUS participating agencies. Any specific statistics required by VC FOCUS participating agencies not compiled by the Sheriff's Narcotics Bureau will be the responsibility of the individual agency investigators.

Dispute Resolution

The participating agencies agree to attempt to resolve any disputes regarding jurisdiction, case assignments, workload, etc., at the supervisory level first before referring the matter to management personnel for resolution. Should a dispute rise above the supervisory level, the Sheriff's Narcotics Captain will schedule a meeting to discuss the issue and work with participating agencies to resolve the dispute. In cases that cannot be resolved at the management level, they will be documented via memorandum for executive review and discussion at Executive Committee (VCLECC).

Duration

The term of this MOU is for the duration of VC FOCUS Operations. The Executive Committee will make decisions to terminate, expand, or change the mission of VC FOCUS. Any party to this agreement may rescind their participation at any time by providing written notification to the Executive Committee at least thirty (30) days prior to withdrawal.

Modifications

This agreement may be modified at any time by written consent of all involved agencies. Modifications to this MOU shall have no force and effect unless such modifications are reduced to writing and signed by an authorized representative of each participating agency.

Agreement

This collaborative agreement may be amended upon the written approval of all parties. Any revisions become effective on the date signed by the signatories. Any party to this agreement may rescind their participation at any time by providing written notification to the other participating agencies.

We, the undersigned, as authorized representatives of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, Ventura County District Attorney's Office, Ventura County Probation Agency, Oxnard Police Department, Port Hueneme Police Department, Santa Paula Police Department, Simi Valley Police Department, Ventura Police Department, California Highway Patrol, California State University Channel Islands Police Department, and Ventura County Community College Police Department do hereby approve this document.

Federal agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agree to assist and participate in the mission of VC FOCUS. Task force participation or support by Federal Agencies will be by agreement in separate MOUs. The Narcotics Captain will report task force activities to the California Attorney General annually as required by the California Values Act.



Jim Fryhoff, Sheriff
Ventura County Sheriff's Office



Erik Nasarenko, District Attorney
Ventura County District Attorney's Office

Gina Johnson, Chief
Ventura County Probation Agency



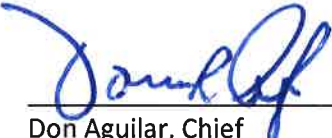
Charles Steven Shorts, Chief
Simi Valley Police Department



Jason Benites, Chief
Oxnard Police Department



Darin Schindler, Chief
Ventura Police Department



Don Aguilar, Chief
Santa Paula Police Department



Robert Albertson, Chief (acting)
Port Hueneme Police Department



Drake Massey, Chief
Cal State Channel Islands Police Department



Kelli Florman, Chief
Ventura County Community College Police



L.M. Maples, Chief
California Highway Patrol