

From: Sgt. K.D. Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2014 9:50 AM
To: DIR OSHSB
Subject: Law Enforcement Safety Equipment
Importance: High

This is a law enforcement equipment question.

I am a Sergeant with LAPD, and train the department and management in Crowd and Riot control including planning and strategies.

In 2008 I contacted your office for an opinion on a police helmet and face shield used in crowd control. The questions was:

- 1) Is the helmet and face shield considered mandatory safety equipment for an officer who is being deployed in front of a crowd?
- 2) If an Incident Commander decides that he will not allow officers to wear their helmets while standing in front of a crowd for public perception, is he violating the officers right to wearing of safety equipment?

Background:

There is an increasing philosophy by some I/C's that they will not deploy officers in front of crowds assembled either legally during a sanctioned demonstration, or illegally, due to their concern about public perception of an overbearing and repressive police presence. These I/C's have opted to stack the helmets in a vehicle, and if the crowd becomes unruly and start throwing projectiles at officers, then and only then, would they allow officers to retrieve and don their helmets.

The problem is the time that it takes to helmet squads, then relieve the officer on line to retrieve their helmets.

In 2008, your office opined that a police helmet is considered a piece of mandatory safety equipment for police officers. However, Cal/OSHA

does not set the standards on when departments must allow officers to don their helmets.

You further advised that Cal/OSHA would not get involved unless a police officer was struck in the head or face with a projectile that would have been protected by the helmet and face shield, unless the officer was hospitalized for 24 hours or longer, at which time you would initiate an investigation, or the officer made an official complaint through your office.

Is the information I received in 2008 still applicable, or has anything changed? I am addressing a Chiefs Conference on November 3rd, and want to make sure I am giving the most current information.

Thank you for your time and assistance,

Kirk Smith

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