

12-1127-S1

MOTION


A recent report has indicated that a shortage of fingerprint analysts in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has led to a backlog of untested fingerprint evidence, which in some cases may cause a delay of several months to analyze evidence. The report notes the City's hiring freeze as a major factor to the current backlog. Since 2009, the LAPD's Latent Print Unit has lost approximately 25 percent of its staffing. However, the amount of incoming evidence has remained the same over the past few years.

According to the report, the LAPD is moving toward adopting a plan that will "ration" the Department's testing capacity for fingerprint evidence in property crimes. The plan will provide each area station and specialized division a maximum of 10 cases per month which will receive prompt fingerprint analysis in these cases. The remaining cases will be added to a waiting list which will take longer to complete.

The City's ongoing budget constraints have challenged departments to make the best use of resources while simultaneously preserving core services. In this instance, the Department's plan may be the best available option but the current backlog will also likely increase as a result. Given the plan's citywide impacts on investigating and solving crimes, it is important for the Council to understand the factors which led to the backlog and the Department's plan to prioritize incoming cases and effectively use its resources.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Police Department be instructed to report to the Public Safety Committee on the status of the fingerprint analysis backlog; how the Department's plan maximizes the available resources; and how incoming cases will be prioritized.

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