



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OC Sheriff Public Affairs, 714-904-7042

OC Sheriff sees increase in retail theft arrests, recovery of property after implementing proactive enforcement efforts

MISSION VIEJO, Ca. (Nov. 21, 2022): Proactive enforcement efforts in response to an increase in retail theft activity has resulted in the arrest of 14 suspects responsible for stealing nearly \$43,000 in property during more than 52 retail theft incidents.

Since Oct. 4, OC Sheriff's Mission Viejo Police Services (MVPS) responded to an increased number of theft reports at major retail centers and recovered \$25,000 in stolen property. In multiple incidents, organized retail theft groups are suspected of committing the thefts.

"Leading in to the holiday season, MVPS has increased partnership efforts with private sector retailers, increased our operational deployment, and have undercover units working within the city's shopping centers," said Captain Christopher McDonald, Chief of Police Services for the city of Mission Viejo. "As a result, the apprehension of theft suspects and recovery of stolen property has increased significantly."

The Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center's OC Shield, a public-private sector partnership program, also is focusing efforts on retail theft. Most recently, law enforcement and private sector representatives from Orange and Los Angeles counties discussed effective prevention and collaborative investigation strategies.

"Criminals look to capitalize on the busy holiday shopping season, and it is an issue for retailers across Orange County," said Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner. "While we proactively address retail theft in our communities in a variety of ways, we also need the community to partner with us.

"We encourage retailers to immediately report any theft and ask shoppers to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity."

To report a retail theft call OC Sheriff Dispatch at 714-647-7000 or 949-770-6011. In an emergency or to report a crime in progress, call 9-1-1. For holiday safety information and resources visit ocsheriff.gov/staysafeoc.

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