



SAN MATEO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE / COMMUNITY ALERT

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Daly City, San Bruno, and San Mateo Police Departments Report Significant Success with Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Program

Coordinated enforcement efforts, funded through the state's ORT grant, lead to increased arrests, recovered merchandise, and strengthened retail security measures.

San Mateo, CA- January 7, 2026 - The Daly City Police Department, in partnership with the San Bruno and San Mateo Police Departments, is proud to announce significant progress in the fight against organized retail theft (ORT). This success has been made possible through a multi-million-dollar state ORT grant and the creation of a regional, multi-agency task force.

Since launching on October 1, 2023, the ORT Task Force has deployed officers throughout Daly City, San Bruno, and San Mateo, focusing on identifying, deterring, and apprehending individuals and groups involved in organized retail theft. These efforts have strengthened collaboration between law enforcement and the community while helping keep local businesses and neighborhoods safer.

Daly City Police Chief Cameron Christensen remarked on the strength of this collaborative model, stating, *"This task force has demonstrated what is possible when agencies integrate resources, expertise, and resolve. Our officers have worked tirelessly to safeguard our commercial businesses, and the progress we've seen is a direct result of their dedication and the strong partnerships we've built with retailers and community stakeholders."*

The task force's accomplishments are rooted in a unified enforcement strategy supported by high-visibility patrols, surveillance operations, and rapid-response interventions throughout major retail corridors. Officers from the three cities have gained increased familiarity with shopping center layouts, security procedures, and day-to-day operations; an insight made possible through continuous engagement with retail partners.

San Bruno's Police Chief Matthew Lethin emphasized the regional nature of the issue, noting, *"Organized retail theft impacts every city in our region, and addressing it requires a united front. The collaboration among our three departments has allowed us to respond more efficiently and strategically, and we are proud of the positive impact this initiative has had on local businesses and residents."*

Ongoing collaboration with property managers, security personnel, and loss-prevention teams has strengthened communication and mutual expectations, resulting in an improved flow of real-time

information sharing. These partnerships, coupled with familiarity gained through repeated contact, have enabled officers to conduct quicker, more informed responses to incidents affecting local retailers.

The task force's success has also been supported by its strong partnership with the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office. With a dedicated Deputy District Attorney assigned to the task force, cases tied to ORT activity receive timely review and streamlined prosecution. San Mateo's Police Chief Ed Barberini highlighted the importance of this collaboration, stating, *"The ORT Task Force reflects our shared commitment to innovative, regional policing. By working together, we have strengthened our ability to disrupt criminal networks, support our business community, and enhance public safety across jurisdictional lines."*

Success Stories

On February 22, 2025, officers assigned to the Organized Retail Theft Task Force (ORTTF) responded to a reported theft at the Target store in San Bruno. Officers located and detained the suspect within minutes near the police station, and recovered stolen merchandise valued at \$460.26.

Further investigation revealed the suspect was on supervised probation and had been identified by Target as a prolific organized retail theft offender. The suspect was linked to multiple retail theft cases throughout the Bay Area, resulting in approximately \$12,438.26 in losses since September 2024. The suspect was transported and booked into the San Mateo County Jail for Organized Retail Theft in violation of Penal Code section 490.4(a)(1).

On June 13, 2025, San Bruno Police officers conducted a traffic stop near the intersection of Cherry Avenue and Sneath Lane. Following the investigation, the vehicle was towed, and officers conducted a standard inventory search prior to removal.

During the search, officers located multiple large bags containing new, unopened merchandise believed to be stolen retail property. Officers assigned to the Organized Retail Theft Task Force assumed the investigation. Based on their training and experience, the quantity and type of merchandise, lack of receipts, and method of concealment were consistent with organized retail theft activity.

Loss Prevention representatives later confirmed the merchandise was suspected stolen property from Safeway stores throughout the Bay Area, with a total recovery value of approximately \$5,052.84. The suspect(s) were identified, and arrest warrants were issued for Organized Retail Theft in violation of Penal Code section 490.4(a)(1).

On September 10, 2025, officers participating in an Organized Retail Theft Task Force operation in Daly City were alerted by Target Loss Prevention to an active shoplifting incident. The suspect exited the store without paying for merchandise and was detained shortly thereafter.

During the investigation, officers determined the suspect was a convicted felon and was in possession of pepper spray and a stun gun. A subsequent search of the suspect's vehicle revealed a loaded Derringer-style handgun and suspected narcotics. Records checks confirmed the firearm was not registered to the suspect and that the registered owner was deceased.

The suspect was arrested and booked into the San Mateo County Jail on multiple felony and misdemeanor charges, including possession of a firearm by a felon, possession of a loaded firearm, possession of a controlled substance while armed, and retail theft.

Statistical Data

Since the launch of the grant, the ORT Task Force has investigated 334 cases and made 372 arrests, including 148 bookings and 224 citations. The total value of stolen property was \$180,770, with approximately \$168,023 recovered. Out of 3,832 items reported stolen, 3,662 were recovered.

In 2025 alone, the Task Force investigated 135 cases and made 143 arrests, including 63 bookings and 80 citations. The total value of stolen property during the year was \$78,519, with about \$72,425 recovered. Of the 1,239 items reported stolen, 1,149 were returned to their owners.

In the final quarter of 2025, the Task Force investigated 27 cases and made 28 arrests, including 11 bookings and 17 citations. Stolen property valued at \$8,515 was reported, with \$8,384 recovered. Of the 271 items taken, 269 were successfully returned.

These results highlight the ORT Task Force's dedication to holding offenders accountable and recovering stolen property, helping to keep our community and local businesses safer.

Property Crime Reduction

The San Mateo Police Department is pleased to share that commercial thefts in the city have dropped significantly over the past year. In 2024, there were 1,267 reported incidents, compared to 1,058 in 2025, a decrease of about 16 percent. This drop highlights the department's ongoing commitment to proactive policing, working closely with the community, and using effective crime prevention strategies to keep local businesses safe.

Looking Forward

The Daly City, San Bruno, and San Mateo Police Departments are proud of the work done by the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Task Force and remain committed to building on its successes. Strong collaboration between law enforcement and the community is key to keeping our neighborhoods safe, preventing retail theft, and supporting local businesses. We urge residents, business owners, and visitors to stay alert—if you see something suspicious, say something. Reporting concerns to your local police helps us respond quickly and effectively, protecting everyone in the community. By working together and keeping the lines of communication open, we can create a safer, more secure environment for all.

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