



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** SHERIFF

**File #:** 19-185

Board Meeting Date: 2/26/2019

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Carlos G. Bolanos, Sheriff  
**Subject:** Purchase of TruNarc Analyzer Device

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommendation to:

- A) Adopt a resolution waiving the competitive bidding process for the purchase of handheld narcotics analyzer devices and authorizing the San Mateo County Sheriff or his/her designee to purchase TruNarc handheld narcotics analyzer devices for an amount not to exceed \$257,083; and
- B) Approve an Appropriation Transfer Request recognizing revenue transfer from Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Trust Fund (03818) of \$120,000 and increasing appropriations to Fixed Assets.

**BACKGROUND:**

Narcotics are often located by Sheriff's Office staff in the performance of their duties requiring them to handle, test and package the narcotics for evidence. Fentanyl and other opioid based narcotics which have become more prevalent in recent years are among the many narcotics being located daily in San Mateo County.

Fentanyl has been found in a variety of forms and often resembles the appearance of other less dangerous substances. While common practice in the past has been to exercise precaution when handling narcotics by wearing personal protection equipment, the practice has required manipulating a small amount of the unknown substance for field testing purposes. Because of the significant threat these drugs pose to the health and safety of law enforcement personnel, field testing of suspected narcotics and unknown substances is now discouraged.

In December of 2017, San Mateo County Emergency Medical Services generated a County Drug Surveillance Report. The report indicated that between January of 2017 and November of 2017,

there were 45 administrations of Narcan; 112 self-reported overdoses to California Poison Control; and 33 drug-related deaths from suspected fentanyl, heroin, and other opioids.

A product called TruNarc is currently available to Law Enforcement. TruNarc is a handheld scientific drug analyzer that allows trained staff to scan substances through packaging, eliminating the need for direct contact and manipulation of possible harmful substances.

The TruNarc device is currently utilized by the San Mateo County Narcotics Task Force, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad, and the San Mateo Police Department. The TruNarc device has been reported by County staff and by other agencies as an extremely effective method of obtaining presumptive field test results.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Sheriff's Office would like to purchase eight TruNarc handheld narcotics analyzer devices. The objective of this request is to enhance the health and safety of Sheriff's Office deputies and correctional staff by minimizing their exposure to potentially dangerous chemicals. Equipping all bureaus of the Sheriff's Office with a TruNarc device would provide a safer option for presumptive testing of unknown substances often found through the course of investigations by Sheriff's Office personnel. It would also minimize the risk of accidental exposure to hazardous substances by staff, civilians and the workplace.

The Sheriff's Office is requesting the competitive bidding process be waived as the TruNarc device created by Thermo Fisher Scientific is currently utilized by the San Mateo County Narcotics Task Force, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad, and the San Mateo Police Department. In addition, our research of the TruNarc device indicates that it is generally priced lower than other similar products on the market and is the preferred device of many law enforcement agencies.

The resolution has been reviewed and approved by County Counsel as to form.

The purchase of the TruNarc device contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Healthy Community by minimizing the risk of workplace exposure to potentially dangerous chemicals.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The purchase of the TruNarc Analyzers totals \$257,083. This purchase will be partially funded by \$120,000 of asset forfeiture funds and the remaining amount will be covered by jurisdictions that contract with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services. There is no Net County Cost.