



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
POLICY BULLETIN**

**TITLE:** Random Metal Detector Searches

**NUMBER:** BUL-5424.0

**ISSUER:** Michelle King, Deputy Superintendent  
School Operations  
Office of the Superintendent

**ROUTING**  
Local District Superintendents  
Local District Support Services  
Directors  
Local District Operations  
Coordinators  
Administrators  
School Police

**DATE:** April 12, 2011

**MAJOR CHANGES** This Bulletin updates BUL-1824.2, issued by the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, to provide additional direction, background information, training resources, purchase information, a sample parent letter with translated attachments, and a sample metal detection search log. Contact support information was also updated.

**GUIDELINES:** The following guidelines apply.

**I. BACKGROUND**

- A. School systems are faced with ever-increasing violence, including the use of weapons on or adjacent to school campuses. In 1993, the District implemented random metal detector searches under Education Code 35160 *et seq.* and under the settled principles of constitutional construction, the safe schools clause which permits reasonable application of metal detectors in schools.
- B. School administrators may conduct searches of individual students when they have reasonable cause to believe that the student has violated or is violating the law or a school rule. “Reasonable cause” includes the following: reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence of the student’s violation; the extent of the search is reasonably related to the suspected violation; and the search is not excessively intrusive considering the student’s age and sex and the nature of the violation.

**II. PURPOSE**

- A. The purpose of this program is to deter the bringing of weapons such as guns, knives, or any other item which might cause harm or injury.
- B. Therefore, under no circumstances are metal detectors to be used solely for the purpose of searching students who might be suspected of having violated other school rules.
- C. Any person found to be in possession of a gun or other dangerous weapon as defined either in the California State Penal or Education Codes shall be



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arrested. If, during the course of a search, contraband is observed that is a violation of published District or school policy and/or regulations, such items may be confiscated and the students may be subject to disciplinary action.

- D. Students who refuse to submit to a wand search consistent with these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary actions for defying the valid authority of school personnel. Other persons refusing a search consistent with these guidelines must be escorted off campus.

### III. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING RANDOM METAL DETECTOR SEARCHES

#### A. Posting Signs

- 1. Signs shall be posted in several prominent locations at the site advising that all persons on the premises are subject to search for weapons by metal detector. Schools in need of new or additional signs shall contact Maintenance and Operations for replacements.

#### B. Selection Of Staff To Conduct Metal Detection Searches

- 1. The search team should be comprised of certificated employees, both male and female, and augmented with other staff as necessary.
- 2. School Police may be requested to accompany and observe the search team, but may not participate in the actual searching. School Police participation in random searches must be limited to handling arrests or other criminal situations that might occur during the course of a metal detection search operation. However, School Safety Officers (SSOs) who are properly trained may assist with random medical detector searches, as they are not sworn officers.
- 3. Personnel selected to be members of the school search team must be respectful and sensitive to the right of privacy and other concerns of the individual being searched.
- 4. The searching of any student, employee or visitor shall only be conducted by a search team member of the same gender.

#### C. Scheduling Metal Detection Searches

- 1. It is required that all secondary schools conduct random metal detector searches on a daily basis and incorporated into the overall school safety measures. Furthermore, search operations should be conducted at various hours of the school day to avoid predictability.



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2. Schools are expected to keep a record of their random metal detector searches. A logbook of the searches must be kept for the entire school year in the office of the administrator in charge of operations and in the Safe School Plan binder. These logs must be filed and maintained for three years. These logs must be readily available for inspection. A sample log is attached to this bulletin.

### D. Selection Of Location On The Site To Conduct Metal Detection Searches

1. Whenever possible, select the locations within the building or grounds that do not expose students or other persons being searched to the view of the general student body population, particularly to the view of those who are not being subjected to the search procedure.
2. Whenever possible, the location of the search operation should be adjacent to the classrooms(s) or hallway in which students who are to be subject of the search are located. A nearby vacant classroom, office or workroom should be available in the event that it becomes necessary to more thoroughly search a particular student. This would be the case when a metal detector (wand) activates and it is not possible to satisfactorily determine the cause either through questioning or a light pat-down of the person. Whenever it is necessary for a student to be removed for a more thorough search, he or she shall be accompanied by two adult employees of the same gender as the student. The California Education Code Section 49050, prohibits removal or rearranging of pupil's clothing in a manner to permit a visual inspection of the underclothing, breast, buttocks, or genitals of the pupils

### E. Random Search Versus Total Population Search

1. A total population search is one wherein every person who enter the premises is searched; such as at selected athletic events or after-school dances.

Although called a random search, a specific pattern of who is to be selected to be searched is established prior to implementation. In addition, the search personnel may not deviate from the pattern during the course of that particular session. As an example, every third or fifth person who enters a hallway or classroom may be searched or some other means may be used to establish a method of selection which results in an objective, unbiased search pattern.

2. No student or persons shall be selected to be searched based solely upon their gender, race, ethnicity, physical appearance, manner of dress, or



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association with any particular group of persons.

### F. Search Operation

1. A pre-established random plan should be used to select which students and what articles are to be searched. It is important that sufficient staff be involved in the search to prevent the possibility of any selected student disposing of contraband/weapons or not reporting to the location where the metal detection search is being conducted.
2. All students selected shall be required to bring all of their personal effects in their possession at the time they are selected, i.e., coat, purse, book bag, backpack, or other similar articles.
3. Upon entering the metal detection search location, the selected student shall be advised of the purpose of the operation, the method in which the search will be conducted, and the fact that this selection was made in a random manner.
4. A student or person to be searched shall be directed to remove all metal objects from his/her pockets (including coins, etc.). The student is to give his/her personal belongings, as described above, to a search team member or they should be placed on a table or desk in plain view of the student. These articles shall then be physically searched only to the degree necessary to affirm that no firearms are concealed therein. The student shall then be scanned by a hand-held metal detector (wand). The staff member operating the device must use an identical scanning technique/pattern on each student.
5. The staff member will scan the entire student, including socks, front and back pockets, waist, chest, and legs.
6. If the metal detector activates, the student shall be asked whether he or she is in possession of any metallic object in the area scanned. After determining the suspected article is not a firearm and is removable, request the student to remove the article and re-scan. If an activation reoccurs and the article cannot be removed, the operator shall visually confirm the student's explanation, i.e., jewelry, belt, buckle, rivets on pants or as a second alternative, by lightly touching (do not grab/touch) the area which is causing the repeated activation.

### G. Searching Other Areas Of The School

1. A locker search plan should be implemented. These searches should be conducted on a daily basis using a random selection pattern. A minimum



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of ten lockers a day should be searched. Prior to the implementation of daily random locker searches, notification must be given to both students and parents. This may be accomplished by announcements over the public address system/letter to parents, etc.

2. When the lockers are searched, staff members should leave a written notification with in the locker informing the student that the locker was searched.
3. As a matter of daily routine, all members of the school staff should check their areas of responsibility, i.e., classrooms, restrooms, or grounds, for concealed weapons.

### H. Training

Members should be familiar with both the District policy and the operation of the detectors. Each member should take the Learning Zone Random Metal Detector Searches training class. It is currently posted on the STEPS (Safety Training for Emergency Preparedness at Schools) web site at STEPS.lausd.net. A reference video about metal detector searches is available on the Office of School Operations web site. Look under “resources” and then “videos.”

### I. Minimum Equipment Resources

Every middle school and high school with enrollment less than 1000 shall have a minimum of two metal detector wands.

Every middle school and high school with enrollment of more than 1000 shall have a minimum of four metal detector wands. They must be in service to be used for each gender at every search. Additional wands can be purchased from LAUSD Stores Warehouse using commodity code 680-44-20580.

**AUTHORITY:** This is a policy of the Office of the Deputy Superintendent for School Operations.

*New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 469 U.S. 325 (1985).  
*Vernonia School District v. Acton*, 115 S.Ct. 2386 (1985),  
*People v. Latisha W.*, 60 Cal.App.4<sup>th</sup>1524 (1998).  
*In Re William V.*, 111 Cal.App.4<sup>th</sup> 1464 (2003).  
*In re Randy G.*, 26 Cal. 4<sup>th</sup> 556 (2001)..  
California Education Code section 49050.  
75 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 155 (1992).



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**RELATED RESOURCES:** Metal Detector Training for Schools at: [STEPS.lausd.net](http://STEPS.lausd.net).

**ASSISTANCE:** For assistance, please contact your Local District Operations Coordinator. For further assistance contact:

School Operations at (213) 241-5337

Deputy Chief of the Los Angeles School Police Department at (213) 742-8207