

July 18, 2025

California Incident Based Reporting System/ National Incident Based Reporting System Update

Overview

In June 2024, the California Department of Justice (CalDOJ) Master Charge Table team repealed 175+ charge codes. These charges were repealed for statistical reporting purposes and can no longer be sent to the California Incident Based Reporting System (CIBRS), which is the California specific system for gathering crime statistics and reporting crimes to CalDOJ and the US Department of Justice (US DOJ). The repealed charges are largely comprised of property crimes, such as theft, and represent roughly 10% of total regional crimes. As a result, the San Diego region is losing valuable data, context, and accuracy about the types of crime occurring in the region. Please note that this committee report pertains to how specific charges have been repealed for statistical reporting purposes under CIBRS and CalDOJ, and this is a separate and unique process from how charge codes are processed locally by our District Attorney's Office and Court. These differences will be addressed below.

Action: Information

ARJIS staff will present an update on current concerns and actions moving forward.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

None.

Key Considerations

This issue is being presented by The Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), which serves as San Diego's regional center for gathering, standardizing, and sharing crime data among San Diego's 12 local law enforcement agencies and 53 state and federal ARJIS member law enforcement agencies. ARJIS has served as the regional body for compiling and reporting all crime statistics to CalDOJ and US DOJ for over 40 years.

Currently, ARJIS handles all crime reporting for 11 of our 12 local law enforcement agencies to the state CIBRS program¹. CIBRS is the California specific version of the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) crime data collection program, which captures detailed information on 52 types of crime or offense categories such as homicide, rape, robbery and larceny and 8 types of arrests such as Driving Under the Influence (DUI). When officers write a crime or arrest report in the field, they assign charge codes to each case based on the elements of the crime. Each charge code is then mapped to one or more CIBRS/NIBRS offense codes.

In June 2024, the CalDOJ Master Charge Table team, repealed 175+ charge codes which San Diego officers often use in their crime reports. Within the next several months, the California CIBRS team stopped accepting these charges as valid, reportable, CIBRS crimes, which increased the regional CIBRS rejected case rate from less than 1% to just over 13%. These sudden errors not only disrupted the flow of data into CIBRS/NIBRS, but they also created reporting backlogs and increased the administrative burden on agency personnel. Additionally, when these charges were repealed, almost no guidance was provided by CalDOJ on which charges should be used instead, and this has created confusion throughout the region and state.

Please note that these repealed charge codes could technically still be sent to the local District Attorney's Office to be charged and processed in local courts. However, they are no longer accepted as valid crimes

¹ Coronado Police Department currently reports their own CIBRS crime data.

for statistical reporting at the state level, and therefore they are not reported at the federal level. If these charge code continue to be used locally for processing with the District Attorney's Office but are not used to report crime statistically to state and federal organizations, this will create a significant difference in how crime statistics are gathered and recorded at the local level versus the state and federal levels.

Another concern is the loss of specificity in regional crime data. For example, CalDOJ repealed PC 25850(c)(1)-(6) and instead, is only accepting PC 25850(A) – Carrying a loaded firearm. These deactivated variants of 25850 indicated if the weapon was stolen, if the suspect had a prior conviction, and/or if the gun was not being carried by the registered owner. This loss of rich, descriptive, data will have detrimental long term impact on our regional ability to track and understand important crime trends and patterns in the future.

Another major consideration is the technical impact on Records Management Systems (RMS) and police academy courses, many of which are still using repealed charge codes and teaching officers to use repealed charge codes. Adjusting these systems and training modules will require time, vendor support, and financial resources, all of which may be in short supply – particularly for smaller agencies. This situation also puts agencies at risk of falling out of compliance with state and federal reporting standards, potentially jeopardizing eligibility for funding and creating audit vulnerabilities.

Lastly, the implications for regional data sharing are substantial. CIBRS is designed to support cross-jurisdictional information sharing and analysis. Inconsistent or incomplete data submissions due to these repealed code changes can hinder regional investigations, reduce situational awareness, and ultimately diminish the collective ability to address crime effectively across agency boundaries.

Next Steps

ARJIS has been actively working to address the challenges created by these repealed charge codes through analysis and regional coordination. ARJIS staff have been meeting regularly with representatives from member agencies to assess the impact of these changes, gather feedback, and identify common issues. In addition to local coordination, ARJIS has formally requested meetings with the CalDOJ Master Charge Table team to gain clarity on the rationale behind the code deactivations, advocate for regional representation on the charge table working group, and ask for further guidance on which charge codes should be used in the place of repealed charge codes. Currently the San Diego region has no representation on the working group which is making the decisions to deactivate certain charge codes.

Internally, ARJIS has been documenting increasing CIBRS rejection rates and documenting the technical and operational impacts of these changes. This information is being continually compiled to support conversations with CalDOJ and inform potential adjustments to the crime reporting process. ARJIS is also working with agency RMS vendors where applicable, to explore technical solutions for remapping or reconfiguring systems to align with regional needs to possibly maintain one set of charges locally and another set of charges for state reporting. Additionally, ARJIS will meet with statewide law enforcement bodies such as the California Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) and the California State Sheriff's Association (CSSA) to garner statewide support for this important effort. ARJIS will continue to provide additional reports to the SANDAG PSC as policy developments occur and CalDOJ responds to regional concerns.

Anthony Ray, Director