FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject: In-Custody Death Investigation

Date: February 11, 2019

On Monday, February 11, 2019 at approximately 5:22 PM, Fullerton Police Officers responded to the 200 block of S. Kellog Dr. regarding a 22-year-old male who was reportedly causing a disturbance in the street. The anonymous reporting party advised Fullerton Police Dispatch that the male in question was acting erratically and yelling at people as they walked by.

When officers arrived, they recognized the male from recent similar calls involving the male and his erratic and violent behavior. At approximately 3:58 PM earlier today, the 22-year-old male’s father called Fullerton Police Dispatch and he told Dispatchers that the his son was being disruptive, and he warned Dispatchers that the male would possibly fight with police when they arrived. Officers arrived on scene and they contacted the male. After speaking with the male and his family, the family advised police that the male could stay with them and that they would be able to control him. They did not want anything done further with the male.

The officers who arrived on scene at 5:22 PM also recognized the 22-year-old male from an incident that occurred on Saturday, February 2, 2019. During that incident, Fullerton Fire was in the area of Magnolia and Valencia for a matter unrelated to the male. As the Firefighters were leaving the scene, the same 22-year-old male jumped in front of the Fire Engine and attempted to fight the Firefighters. Fullerton Police Officers responded to the Firefighters request for help and a struggle ensued as they attempted to detain the male. He was found to be in possession of methamphetamine at the time and he was ultimately detained for a mental health evaluation and transported to the hospital.

Today at approximately 5:22 PM, when officers approached the 22-year-old male, who was yelling and screaming in the street, the male immediately began to rush the officers. The officers instructed the male’s family to go inside their house for their safety. Officers fired 40 millimeter less lethal “spoon gun” rounds at the 22-year-old male rushing at them, striking him in the upper body. The less lethal rounds had no effect on the male and he continued to rush at them. Three separate Fullerton Police Officers deployed their tasers, however they had no effect on the male and he continued to rush them. After the spoon gun rounds and three tasers were deployed with no effect, a physical fight ensued.

The officers were able to place the male into handcuffs, but he continued to be violent and uncooperative while in handcuffs. Paramedics arrived, as is standard practice with taser deployments, to transport the male to hospital for a medical clearance. Because
the male continued to fight, Paramedics contacted the receiving hospital and they were granted permission by the hospital to administer a sedative to the male in order to calm him down. The male calmed down and he was placed in an ambulance for transport to a local hospital.

While en route to the hospital, the male suddenly stopped breathing in the back of the ambulance. Paramedics began life saving measures, including CPR, and continued to do so until they reached the hospital. Once at the hospital, Emergency Room staff continued to administer life saving measures however the male was pronounced deceased by Emergency Room staff.

During the course of the physical fight, three officers were injured. One officer received injuries to his face, one officer suffered an injury to her neck, and one officer suffered injuries to his abdomen. They were treated at a local hospital and have all since been released.

After the incident, it was learned that the 22-year-old male had broken into a residence on the 200 block of S. Kellog Dr. approximately 20 minutes prior to officers’ arrival. He began punching and kicking the front door of the residence where a female adult was home alone. She did not know the suspect, and he eventually broke her door down and entered her home, while she was screaming, for a few seconds before leaving. This incident was captured on the resident’s CCTV system.

As is standard practice for any in-custody death involving Fullerton Police Officers, the Orange County District Attorney’s Office was contacted and Investigators responded for an independent investigation of the circumstances leading up to the in-custody death.

The male’s identity will be released by the Orange County Coroner at a time they deem appropriate.

Anyone with information about this incident, and the other incidents mentioned, is encouraged to contact the Fullerton Police Crimes Persons Unit at (714) 738-6776. Those wishing to provide information anonymously can call the Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1(855) TIP-OCCS or can visit their website at www.p3tips.com/913.