

California Troopers Offer Relief in Crime Wave

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SALINAS, Calif. --

After five homicides took place in three days, the city of Salinas is calling for back up.

The California Highway Patrol has been asked to step in and assist the police department, which has added more officers to the streets to prevent another shooting death.

CHP officers are being brought in under the banner of Operation Impact, a program originally started in 2008 that brought together the CHP, the Salinas Police Department and the Monterey County Sheriff's Department.

Although talks were already under way to bring back the CHP's aid before this past weekend's violence, Monday's three homicides turned out to be the breaking point. The sheriff's department will not be used in this version of Operation Impact, officials said.

The only way to stop it is get out on the street with in your face enforcement with these gang members, said Dino Bardoni, of the Salinas Police Department. We may know who some of the suspects are and we're in the process of trying to prove it.

The CHP said they agreed to step in and help deal with the situation immediately.

The numbers disturb us, said Scott Lynch, of the California Highway Patrol. We're members of the community and any of those concerns are our concerns and whatever we can do to support the agencies I think that helps.

CHP officers will conduct traffic patrols, which will free up Salinas police patrols to focus on gang violence.

Bardoni said there are 5,000 known gang members in Monterey County, 3,000 of which call Salinas home.

He said it is physically impossible to keep track of all of them, their families and associates, so more street officers and intense investigations is the best short term solution.

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