



Skid row activists want investigation of LAPD policing practices

Frank Stoltze

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A Skid Row organization asked the federal government today to launch a civil rights investigation into the LAPD's policing practices. KPCC's Frank Stoltze reports that the group has long complained of police abuse in the 50 square block area of downtown L.A.

Members of the Los Angeles Community Action Network say police abuses on Skid Row continue "on a daily basis." They say LAPD officers unnecessarily handcuff homeless people and residents of Skid Row hotels for infractions as minor as jaywalking.

Activists say that in one case, officers "severely" beat a woman who allegedly assaulted them with an ink pen. They contend that some of the policing problems result from the LAPD's failure to deploy enough of its officers who are specially trained to interact with mentally ill people.

These complaints arose despite an agreement between the LAPD and American Civil Liberties Union. In it, the department agrees not to handcuff Skid Row residents unless the officer reasonably believes the suspect is a threat or will interfere with an investigation. In the past Chief Bill Bratton has said his officers are abiding by that agreement.

Skid Row is home to more than 13,000 people. Most of them are African-American.