

Name: _____

Period _____ Mr. Tripodi

The Law and You:

Crisis in San Pedro

San Pedro, California, is a small village with a population of 47 people, 12 dogs, several cows, pigs, and a few chickens, located in the dry southeastern part of the state just to the north of the Mexican border.

Located well inland from the coast, the village is rather isolated from other communities by rugged canyons and vast stretches of desert. The inhabitants are primarily subsistence farmers with little in the way of modern technological conveniences. For its water supply, the village depends upon deep, underground springs.

In the midst of a severe drought cycle, the springs have virtually dried up. The water problem has been compounded by a series of earthquakes throughout southern California and northern Mexico.

The major California cities and their suburbs to the west, located along the coast, have been severely damaged and have suffered numerous casualties. The earthquakes have blocked all communications between San Pedro and the outside world. Landslides have destroyed the one road running from the village through a canyon to the outside, and telephone lines are down throughout the area.

The water problem is critical. The springs are almost dry, and several individuals may die unless they receive water consistently over the next several days. These people include a party of four dehydrated backpackers who had been lost in the desert and wandered into the village, several children under the age of five, and several elderly villagers over the age of 65.

The one general store in the village was destroyed by a landslide. With many of the houses destroyed, a number of the villagers are without shelter. Two healthy individuals have gone for assistance, on foot, but the nearest highway is perhaps a three-day hike.

Discuss how you would meet the demands of the crisis in San Pedro. Note the following questions to consider:

1. What problems must be faced by the villagers of San Pedro? Which problem(s) should they deal with first?
2. What resources are available to the villagers? In what quantity? In what form? Are some resources more important than others?
3. Are some individuals or groups more important than others? If so, why? How would you deal with the available resources in regard to these individuals or groups? What decisions must you make?
4. How do you justify the decisions you've made? On what grounds? On moral grounds? On pragmatic grounds? Self-interest?