



USE OF FORCE

9451

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of this Department that officers shall use only the amount of force that is objectively reasonable to effect the arrest, to prevent escape, overcome resistance, or to protect others and the officer from death or serious bodily injury.

CAL FIRE recognizes and respects the value of all human rights and dignity and for the sanctity of every human life. It is also understood that vesting officers with the authority to use reasonable force and protect the public welfare requires a careful balancing of all human interests. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, each officer is expected to make such decisions in a professional, impartial and reasonable manner.

The use of force by law enforcement is a matter of critical concern both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Officers are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied human encounters and when warranted, may use force in carrying out their duties.

Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of such excessive force.

DEFINITION(S)

Force: The amount of effort required to effect the arrest, to prevent escape, overcome resistance, or to protect others and the officer from death or serious bodily injury.

Deadly Force: Any use of force that creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury, including, but not limited to, the discharge of a firearm.

Reportable Use of Force: Any force causing physical injuries or involving chemical agent use, baton use, carotid restraint, less lethal projectile weapon use, conducted electrical weapon use, the use of personal body weapons (i.e. closed fists, elbow, knee strikes, etc.) or an officer involved shooting.

Serious Bodily Injury: A bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, unconsciousness, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member or organ. It is more severe than a mere physical injury.



Per California Criminal Law Jury Instruction 925, physical injuries that are considered serious may include (but are not limited to) loss of consciousness, wounds requiring extensive suturing, bone fractures or concussions.

Shooting: This includes any discharge of a firearm during an interaction between a civilian and an officer, regardless of whether any person was injured. A firearm is defined as a weapon which fires a shot by the force of an explosion, e.g., all handguns, rifles, shotguns and other such devices commonly referred to as firearms. Notable exceptions to this category are electronic control devices, stun guns, BB, pellet, air, gas-powered guns, or weapons that discharge rubber bullets or bean bags.

Officer Involved Shooting: An officer discharging their firearm against a person, or that results in injury or death to a person.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Authority	Responsibilities
Staff Chief/Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement	Reviews all submitted use of force incident reports and submits use of force data to the Department of Justice.
Region Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement or designee	Reviews all reports submitted by supervisors and submits completed use of force incident reports to the Department Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement.
Unit Chief or designee/peace officer’s supervisor	Completes notifications and written report of circumstances related to use of force incidents.

RELATED FORM(S) / LINK(S)

- [Procedure 9451-1, General Provisions](#)
- [Procedure 9451-2, Carotid Restraint](#)
- [Procedure 9451-3, Deadly Force](#)
- [Procedure 9451-4, Use of Force Reporting](#)
- [Procedure 9451-5, Duty to Intercede](#)
- [Procedure 9451-6, Batons](#)
- [Procedure 9451-7, Chemical Agents](#)
- [Procedure 9451-8, Conducted Electrical Weapon](#)
- [Procedure 9451-9, Kinetic Energy Projectile](#)

AUTHORITY

- [Penal Code 835a](#)
- [Government Code 12525.2](#)
- [Government Code 7286](#)



REFERENCE(S)

[California Department of Justice – Use of force incident reporting](#)

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT(S)

[Fire Protection, Law Enforcement](#)

REVISION DATE

Revision Date: July 2020
Last Reviewed: July 2020