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| Policy #  **Knife/Cutting Tools** | Related Policies: | |
| *This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third-party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis for internal discipline and/or criminal charges.* | | |
| Applicable State Statutes: | | |
| KACP Accreditation Standard: | | |
| Date implemented: | | Revision Date: May 1, 2025 |

1. **POLICY:**

Officers of «Insert\_LE\_Agency» are authorized, to carry knives and/or other cutting tools for purposes pursuant to this policy. This policy is intended to instruct the officer in the acceptable use of the knife/cutting tool in common tasks.

1. **DEFINITIONS:**

* **Knife/Cutting tool -** An instrument for cutting, consisting of a sharp-edged metal or composite blade, fitted with a handle of some type. (This would include other tools that have an edged blade, eg., Leatherman® tool)
* **Immediate measure of defense -** Taking action or using any implement to defend the officer’s life or safety, or the life or safety of another, with implements or devices not normally intended to be weapons or issued as public safety equipment.
* **Folding knife -** A knife with a hinged blade.
* **Fixed-blade knife –** Any knife in which the blade and the grip or handle are permanently fused in some manner.

1. **PROCEDURES:**
2. Precautions:

Officers are authorized to possess and use a knife/cutting tool both on and off duty. While in normal duty uniform or in civilian attire, officers may carry a folding knife/cutting tool in a specifically designed holder on the duty belt or in a pocket. Folding knife blades/cutting tools must not be casually visible to the public, except during intentional use by the officer. During special operations or assignments such as SWAT, search parties in rough terrain, and rescue operations, Officers may carry fix blade knives in sheaths on the belt, and the knife/cutting tool and sheath may be visible to the public. All carriers, sheaths, and knives/cutting tools must be of the type normally carried by police Officers, and subject to the approval of the Chief or designee.

It is recognized that Officers may have many needs for a knife/cutting tool, including both general work and for limited defensive purposes. While not considered to be a primary weapon of choice in a defense-of-life situation, Officers may, under extraordinary circumstances, use a knife/cutting tool in defense of their life and the lives of others.

1. General Use:

The officer shall use reasonable care in the general use of the knife/cutting tool as a tool to prevent injury to the officer and others. General use of knives/cutting tools may be employed in such actions as cutting injured occupants out of seat belts, to release flex restraints in emergencies, to pry, open, cut, etc.

The carrying and use of any knife/cutting tool by on and off-duty officers is done as unobtrusively as possible so as not to alarm any bystander. Officers must use the knife/cutting tool in a safe and responsible manner, taking care not to exhibit or handle the knife/cutting tool carelessly.

1. Defensive Use:

Officers may use a knife/cutting tool as a weapon of defense under extraordinary circumstances where deadly force is justified under their department’s response to resistance policy. Any use of a knife/cutting tool as a defensive weapon must be in compliance with a response to resistance policy.

Officers are cautioned that a knife/cutting tool is primarily a cutting tool to assist them in their daily duties and is not intended to be a primary weapon of defense. Extraordinary circumstances, however, may dictate that the knife/cutting tool be used as an immediate measure of defense of life.

The use of a knife/cutting tool against an aggressive, life-threatening suspect can be employed only when the officer has an objective and reasonable belief that human life is in imminent danger of serious physical injury or death, and this belief is based on the totality of the circumstances known to the officer at the time. Officers are cautioned that while any use of deadly force is a grave undertaking by police, the use of any knife/cutting tool against another human being may be viewed as an extraordinary defensive measure, and should be reserved for those extraordinary situations where defensive options are limited.

D. Reporting Use of Force:

Officers who cause physical injury or death to other persons through the use of a knife/cutting tool should secure the scene as possible, call for medical assistance, and notify their immediate supervisor. Once notified of an incident in which an officer has utilized force, the supervisor will immediately respond to the scene to investigate the incident.