

### 6.8.5 FIREARMS – SHOOTING POLICY

Revised April 16, 2007

The Support Bureau has audit responsibility

The policy of this Department governing the display and discharge of firearms affirms that officers have the duty to use firearms whenever the necessity exists to protect their lives or the lives of others. It shall be the responsibility of the individual officer to use firearms only when reasonably necessary and justified under the circumstances.

Firearms shall be regarded as defensive weapons and shall be used by an officer only in the absence of reasonable alternatives and the presence of one or more of the following compelling circumstances:

- **Immediate threat** – In self-defense or in defense of another when the officer reasonably believes there is an immediate threat to life or of serious injury
- **Substantial risk** – To effect the arrest or prevent the escape of a felon or suspected felon when the officer has reasonable cause to believe that:
  - The crime for which the arrest is sought involved the use of or threatened use of deadly force, or the infliction of serious bodily injury; and
  - There is substantial risk that the person whose arrest is sought will cause death or serious bodily harm, if apprehension is delayed
  - Circumstances may necessitate the use of a firearm for other than defensive purposes. Situations in this category include, but are not limited, the following:
    - To sound an alarm or call for assistance when other means of communication cannot be used
    - In the humane interest of terminating the needless suffering of a critically injured (pending death) animal, an officer may use a firearm to dispatch that animal only when all of the following criteria are met:
      - Animal Control is unavailable or is unable to respond in a timely manner
      - The animal's owner has given consent
      - A Field Supervisor has given approval. (In an extreme situation, a Field Supervisor at the scene may approve dispatching a critically injured animal, when death is pending, in the owner's absence) Avoid shooting animals in the head; rabies testing requires intact brain tissue

#### OIS Involving Domestic Animals

- If an officer is involved in an OIS where a pet is injured and the pet owner wants to transport the animal to their veterinarian, allow them to do so. An officer will accompany the owner and the injured animal in order to preserve evidence. Additionally, a priority lab unit will be called on to meet the officer at the veterinarian for photos, etc.
- Under no circumstances will a deceased animal be destroyed (i.e.. cremated) prior to the notification and approval of the Homicide Detail

Firearms shall NOT be discharged under the following circumstances:

- As a warning
- At a moving vehicle or through a vehicle's window, unless circumstances clearly warrant the use of a firearm as a final of defense

This policy is not intended to prohibit the discharge of a firearm during authorized practice and training at an approved area.

The discharge of any weapon by careless or negligent handling by an on or off duty employee shall constitute a neglect of duty.

Any discharge of a firearm by a member of this Department for what any reason, except as part of an authorized training exercise or recreational shooting, shall be reported and documented by the involved employee in compliance with the existing reporting policy.

Each incident involving the discharge of a firearm by a member of this Department, with the exception of training, qualification, and recreation, shall be thoroughly reviewed.